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Most Faithfully Yours
in The Church
G. D. Meade

SERMONS

SELECTIONS FROM THE PULPIT WORKS

OF THE LATE

VERY REV. PHILIP NELSON MEADE,

Rector of Christ Church, Oswego, N. Y., Dean of the Fourth Missionary District and Member of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Central New York.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION BY BISHOP HUNTINGTON

PUBLISHED BY

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"*He being dead, yet speaketh.*"—Heb. 11 : 4.

"*For all the saints, who from their labors rest,*
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy Name, O Jesu, be forever blest.
Alleluia."

INTRODUCTION

SO far as can be seen, and in a general sense, the warrant to preach the Gospel warrants the printing of what is preached. Both are modes of publication of divine truth. A certain quality is imparted to the message of the commissioned herald or prophet by his personality. That personal gift or accomplishment appears distinctly in the pulpit; less distinctly or completely in the printed page. What the preacher brings to the doing of his sacred work, heraldic or prophetic, is one and the same personal power. In the original New Testament Greek, the two names given to him in his apostolical character have nearly the same meaning. They both signify that peculiar spirit and influence which were impressed upon minds of every class by the sermons of the author of this volume, the Rev. Philip Nelson Meade, priest and pastor.

Apart from other merits those sermons were apt, I think, to be inspiriting. The style, the delivery, the stress of voice; the vivid, rapid, unhesitating utterance, were not only felt to be the expression of convictions, of emotion, and of a direct purpose on the part of the man speaking, but they kindled the sympathy, animated the attention and raised the plane of thought in those who listened, and were compelled to listen. There

could be no doubt that what he spoke he believed, and spoke because he believed.

My object here, however, is not to commend the vigor, the skill, or the method of these discourses. By a natural mental energy and activity, by discipline and culture, by temperament and habit, by a most sincere, devout and unquestioning faith, Mr. Meade was made a master in his high calling. My privilege is rather to testify cheerfully and heartily to the consistency between his speech and his character. To do this out of a loving heart is one of the consolations of the bereavement which has joined me to a great company of mourners.

F. D. HUNTINGTON.

SYRACUSE, March 19, 1901.

THE AGELESS LIFE

I am come (*came*) *that they might* (*may*) *have life and that they might* (*may*) *have it* (*more*) *abundantly.*— S. John 10: 10.

JESUS CHRIST reigns supreme among teachers not only by the perfection of His character, but also by the grandeur of His subject. A prophet has many things to say to his generation, but his message is one. The Master treated all the high-class truths in the sphere of religion. His chief story was about life. He did not set Himself to teach men how to organize the state, nor how to analyze their minds, nor how to discharge elementary duties, like prayer and alms-giving, nor how to form a science of theology. This was not because He despised these departments. It was because He proposed to dominate them. He would not localize Himself in one of these directions, because He would inspire them all. Behind the state is the individual; behind the individual is the soul, and the one question of the soul is life. The soul is the organ, and life is the function.

Ethical life implies the soul, and a dead soul is a contradiction in terms. The chief necessity of man is life, and when the Christ opened the springs of life, He fertilized and blessed human nature in all its borders. He was not a politician, but the democracy is His creation. He was not a philosopher, but He has given us the true philosophy of living. He was not a moralist, but the profound ethics of the ages are His inspiration. He was not a theologian, but all theology is contained in His teaching. He was not a creed-maker, but the creeds of Christendom are only statements of what He did and of

what He was. He revived the body of humanity by the regeneration of the individual. Before the Christ came life was a wistful longing. Men desired, they knew not what. Men needed what they did not desire. To the average man the future was a hopeless mystery. To the thinker of the schools it was a speculation. To the saint of the sixteenth Psalm it was a vision. The Christ brought life to light, and He declared not the fact but the doctrine of immortality. Most people hoped that they would live after death. Our Lord told all people that they might know it, and He taught them why they might know it. History acknowledges Him as the first and last authority on the biology of the soul, and experience has proved Him to be the only medium of the higher life. Life was the gift that He carried in His hand. He was the only being that ever walked the earth who did say and could truthfully say what all the centuries have attested, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

An instinct is that part of our spiritual capital which has not been contributed by education or revelation, and our two chief instincts are God and immortality. The hope of the future life has always nestled in the heart of the race, and found wings on occasion. When the savage Indians bury his weapons and utensils with the dead man in order that he may start with a full equipment, they believe that he is somewhere. When the Athenians went out to Eleusis twice a year — in March, as the life of the year springs, and in September, as it fades — and held a solemn function, it was not only that they might live happily, but that they might die with a fairer hope. They made the seasons and the mystic Eleusinian rites tell the story of a brighter and a better life for the soul. Clever people point out that no one can demonstrate immortality. This goes without saying. No knife has ever laid bare a

soul. No crucible has ever afforded the last analysis of life. No syllogisms have ever materialized hope. No equations have ever stated eternity in terms of time. There are some critical persons also who condemn the desire for continued individuality as a subtle form of selfishness. This shows superior discrimination on their part, no doubt, but it is a bit of petty dilettante conceit just the same. There may be an insignificant minority who would be content that their life should be flung back like a cupful of water into the stream from which it was taken. But to the race, while the hope of eternity is by no means based on a give-and-take commerce for the deprivations of time, the destruction of that hope would be irreparable since it is laden with a wealth of compensation and reparation.

The mourners over the buried child or parent are content, because those loved long since are only lost awhile. Saint Stephen, cut off in his youth, does not complain, because he sees Jesus standing at God's right hand. The words which Addison puts upon the lips of Cato aptly represent the judgment of even the heathen world:

> "It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well,
> Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
> This longing after immortality?
> Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
> Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
> Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
> 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us,
> 'Tis Heaven itself that points out a hereafter,
> And intimates eternity to man."

This sublime instinct our Lord found and He did not belittle it. He confirmed it with His sanction. He built on it His doctrine of an ageless life. It was not the function of our blessed Lord to add to our nature. It was His to glorify it. In His hands the instinct of immortality

was raised to its highest power. He began with a tacit distinction between existence and life, which gives a characteristic splendor to His words. Existence is physical, and is dependent on the energy that works in matter. Life is spiritual, and is dependent on the energy that works in mind. We know people who have no point of contact with the thought world. They walk, they work, they play, they eat, they digest; they are fathers, brothers, husbands. Conventionally they fulfill all these relations, but they never think. They only perceive. They never consider anything outside the range of sight and sense. They do not live, they only exist.

This whole country to-day is deeply interested in the subject of money. But it is not money in its philosophic nature, in its ethical relations, in its spiritual possibilities. It is money economically and materially; money as a means of procuring luxury rather than comfort, bread rather than books, houses rather than homes. People are more concerned about money as a basis of commerce than as a means of carrying the Gospel. They desire to buy for themselves before they buy for others. They want it as a means of living. They do not care for it as a vehicle and expression of life. And still, God be thanked that there is another class of persons who are full of ideas, plans, dreams, ambitions, visions. And we say of them, not that they exist, but that they live. It is the approximate statement of a fact in human history. When one man dies we are not astonished, because it had never struck us that he was alive. We never thought of him as a being with a soul. We only regarded him as a perambulating machine, an automaton, who wore clothes and could talk, and laugh, and sing, and jest, and receive his wages and spend them.

When another sort of man dies we are shocked that such a radiant light should have gone out. We never thought about the garments with which he garnished his poor

body. We did not associate him with money, or houses, or lands, though he may have owned them. We never asked or cared what he ate, or how many hours he spent at his desk or in his shop. He had a spiritual nature, and it diffused itself and everyone found it out and was blessed by it. We can understand that this man lives now on and on, only with a larger and a more splendid life. God continues to him over there what He gave him here, and the world of the redeemed is the more glorious because he dwells in it, even as the toiling world here got a foretaste of Heaven from him.

Now, our Lord recognized these conditions in the sphere of spiritual things when He was on earth. He had around Him then, as we have now, existence, which meant inert and unconscious souls, and life, which meant souls receptive and active. Mere existence He called death, and He startled people with queer sayings about it. A disciple wanted to follow Him, but he said he must go first and attend to burying his father. The Master told him "to let the dead bury their dead," and He meant that there were plenty of people whose souls were dead to look after such matters. No trouble to get a crowd at a funeral in Judea or in America, but funerals then, as now, did not set people to thinking, or rouse them from the grave of sloth and selfishness, or send them out to preach the glad tidings of life. This man's duty just then was to let others pay the last tribute of respect to his parent — others who were as lifeless spiritually as the old man was literally — and to go and preach the Gospel of the Resurrection Kingdom himself.

And so again He cried, with mighty emphasis, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God." He meant that the rising from the dead should begin then and there and that the subjects of it would be people who were

walking about the streets of Jerusalem, and Rome, and Athens, and Ephesus, while He was speaking. He said in a noted parable that this animal sort of vitality, which He would not dignify as life, should pass into the other world, and that a soul eaten up with selfishness, and choosing to stand aloof from God here, should be separated from Him and should be gnawed upon by conscious isolation there, while a soul that tenanted a suffering body in this sphere of things, and was purified by trial, and drew its nutriment from God, should live gloriously in the association of the redeemed and in the vision of the Father.

Our Lord assumed existence for all people, but existence on this low plane was not worth very much consideration, and He did not devote much time to its discussion. His chief topic was life. Existence *might* be immortal, but life *had* to be, because He charged it with an ethical content, and made it to consist in the knowledge of God that is in a permanent environment, ties and relations which never change and are ever effective. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou didst send."

And when He invested life with its new meaning, He glorified the idea, but He was embarrassed about the word. Nothing could have done full justice to the ideas of Jesus Christ save a new language, and since that was impossible, He and His disciples were often at cross purposes regarding terms. He meant one thing and they meant another thing by the same sign. With Him life was something eternal and absolute. With them life was something limited and transitory. Life suggested nothing to them at first except the vitality of the body. Death to them was only the dissolution of the body after the departure — they scarcely knew whither — of the immaterial soul. He, on His part, rarely used the terms life and death in this physical, earthy sense. He reserved the words for their highest use and

ignored the popular interpretation of them. "Our friend Lazarus," he said, with careful choice of language, "sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." This brother of Mary and Martha, this friend of Jesus, this good man, this loyal associate, this loving, true home-spirit, could not be dead. It was a moral impossibility.

The sneaking, sniveling, jealous Jews, who saw the Master at the stone-guarded tomb in Bethany, were dead people to the fullest extent of the term, in our Lord's reading of it. It was a moral necessity that they should be so considered. The carping Pharisees, who played the informer to the chief priests, were lifeless. They were far more dead, and in a far worse import dead, than the man who lay in the grave-clothes behind the outer wall of the cave. His spirit was enjoying the loves of Paradise. Theirs was shrinking away under the blight of reasonless, groundless hate.

When the misunderstanding between the Christ and His disciples became hopeless, then He condescended to explain: "Lazarus — if I must speak in your tongue — is dead." Physical death He refused primarily to recognize. It was only an incident in the history of life. Death, truly so called, was a calamity happening to a soul that tenanted a body moving about the streets of Jerusalem or Capernaum. A living soul waxes invulnerable and incapable of dying. "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me though he be dead yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

Our Lord made a brave struggle in such teaching for reality in words and things, and Pentecost liberated the first disciples from bondage to the earthy. But such a spiritual atmosphere of terms like life and death as He interpreted them is too high and too rare for many of our own day. Some will place flowers and plants on the graves of the departed this All-Saints Tide, not with joyous

hope, but with bitter grief; not with the tears of expectant faith, but with the sobs of comfortless despair. Nay, they will speak too often as though they were pagans in the Street of Tombs at Athens, instead of Christians who may sit at Jesus's feet and hear Him say, "Thy brother, thy child — you may believe it — shall rise again."

Nay, friends, we dare say it even to-day. There is too much heathenism in our idea of death, as though it were destruction, and too much anti-Christianity in our notion of life, as though it were but the breathing of the brute. There are in our cemeteries too many broken columns that symbolize life ended untimely, and too few crosses to which faith may cling; too many flower pillows that tell of endless sleep, and too few anchors that speak of hope entering within the veil.

Our Lord had to contend with another inexcusable misstatement which binds up the life of a man with his body bent with his material environment. According to this sordid definition, life is made up of circumstances. If his surroundings are pleasant we say the man has an easy life. If they are adverse, we say he has a hard life. Life, a grand spiritual principle, is stated in terms of food, and clothing, and goods, and houses. Against this degradation of life He lifted up His voice again and again in protest that admits of no answer. He was never weary of reminding His disciples that such things could not constitute life — nay, they were away down beneath it. Life, as He taught it, overtops them all. "Be not over anxious about your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" "Labor not for the meat, that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life — which the Son of Man shall give unto you."

Certainly this indifference to circumstances was not due

to any want of sympathy with the laboring and heavy-laden. Witness His parables and His miracles — words of sympathy, deeds of love. Nor had it anything to do with the favored experiences of His own life. Witness His poverty and deprivation. But He was anxious to lift life above the tyranny of materialism, and to show you and me that what we call life is only living, only the creature comfort of the animal. He was desirous to convince His followers that one could live like God Himself, although he had the whole world arrayed against him; though he left nothing behind him but a peasant's robe, and nothing to mark his body's dust but a lonely grave. He was jealous lest you and I should confound the rough scaffolding of circumstance within which the building was slowly rising, with the temple of life itself. Our Lord and His disciples shared the same life, or rather the same sort of life. That is what He taught in that sixth chapter of Saint John. He is "the bread of life," and "they eat." In this startling image the Master flashes a description of life, and answers the question ever in the background of one's mind.

What is life? It is fellowship with the spirit of Jesus. This is what it was to Him. This is what it is in His children. Life is something that cannot be estimated by the beating of the pulse, or the inventory of a man's possessions, or the cut of his clothes, or the garniture of his table, or the architecture of his dwelling. It must be tested by conscience and weighed in the intangible scales of the Kingdom of Heaven. This life of which we speak — this life which He presupposes and describes — consists in a certain mind, in a certain ruling motive, in a certain trend of character, in a certain obedience of will, in a certain passion for goodness, in a certain hatred of evil. That was His life. That is ours, if we be truly alive.

And again He tells us, in a passage greatly misunder-

stood by the average reader, one way in which this life may become ours. That institution, that memorial sacrifice in the upper room, brings the matter down to particulars, shows the channels through which the life comes, and the touch and unity of it with the great pulsing world beyond, wherein living souls see His face, have His name in their foreheads, and go no more out forever. "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life." With Him life was a condition of the soul, disentangled from any physical mode or environment of existence, and with this profound conception before His mind He did not need to quote the classical argument for immortality. He did not need to cite the analogies of nature or the law of continuity. For one moment we do wonder why the Christ, who alone of all in this world had been within the veil, did not describe at length the details of the unseen state. The next moment we understand that such a revelation would have been alien to His profound teaching about life.

Before His eyes life was not divided into sections, each depending for its character on local coloring. Life here, and there, and everywhere, in its essence and intention, must be the same — conformity to the divine will. As a man lives in this age, so he would live in all the ages; carrying Heaven within him rather than going into Heaven. The life of the soul could not be affected by the death of the body. So taught the Christ. We may reverently suppose that if a man had come to Him with the question, "Shall I live after death?" He would have answered, "That is beside the mark. The point is, Have you life now?" Life is ageless. It cannot be lost. It was itself when the pyramids were new. It shall be not less than itself amid the wrecks of matter and the crush of worlds.

If one should insist on proof of this statement that life is ageless, if men doubt because no man has returned to

tell the story of the invisible sphere of things, our Lord is content to offer Himself. Eternal life hinges largely on this word, "Because I live ye shall live also." Suppose He was the victim of a fond delusion when He ignored the death of the body and preached the ageless life of the soul and insisted on the unseen, then he is dead —

> "And on His grave with shining eyes,
> The Syrian stars look down."

Suppose He knew when He declared life to be the supreme fact of human experience, and death the escape of the butterfly from the chrysalis, and the world a passing show, then He is alive forevermore. How can one be certain that Jesus is with God? It is a question of the last importance, for upon it hangs the fitness of all that we are doing to-day. There are several lines of proof. But two of them are nearest to our discussion now. One of those proofs is mystical — the experience of Christians. This is best suited to saints. And another proof is ethical — the nature of our Lord's earthly life — and this is for us all. The last is most akin to His mind and His methods, because He used to insist on the self-evidencing power of His life. He is alive because He could not die — "I am the resurrection and the life."

It is impossible to appreciate a picture with your face close to a canvas, but that generation which pressed nearest to Him in His earthly form had their attention arrested at least. His words of authority caught the ear. His mien was that of a larger world. His character was beyond criticism. None convinced Him of sin. All honest men yielded Him their admiration. One peasant of Galilee and one stricken woman at Bethany said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

We are to-day confirming this tribute to Him. You never found any word of His that He ought not to have

said. You can't suggest a better word that He might have said. No act of His ever shocked our moral sense. None has fallen short of the ideal. You are never amazed one day by His greatness and another day by His littleness. He is ever incomparably better than you could expect one to be who is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He is tender without being weak, strong without being coarse, lowly without being servile. He has conviction without intolerance, enthusiasm without fanaticism, holiness without bigotry, passion without prejudice. This Man alone never made a false step and never struck a jarring note. Because He was the supreme artist, and the supreme teacher, and the supreme ideal, and the supreme inspiration of life, He alone could say, "I am the life."

Could this life be touched or quenched by any death, even that of the cross? Could Jesus, who gave the Sermon on the Mount and the discourse in the upper room, who satisfied Saint John and loosed Mary of Magdala from her sin, and who remains the unapproachable ideal of perfection, be annihilated by a few nails and by the thrust of a Roman spear? Ah, friends, the certainty of His resurrection does not rest, in its last analysis, on certain isolated appearances during the great forty days. It rests on His life for thirty years. His life was like that of all His children — beyond the reach of death.

What is the proof to you that your father lives to-day in a glorious sphere of things? Was it his deathbed? Was it what he said in that terrible hour which you can never forget? Was it the hope that he expressed, or the message that he sent to others through you, or the benediction that he extended, or the prayers that he offered? Nay, not one of these things — not all of them, precious as they are — approach in your judgment the testimony of that life. My mother did not die. She could not. Death never touched such heavenly vitality as hers.

She lives to-day — the same, and yet different. She is near me as I kneel yonder. That is where she knelt.

Angels and living saints and dead but one communion make, and so I strew the flowers and keep the grass green, and love to hear the birds sing around the lonely mound. Yet she is not there. She is with Him where He is and with the redeemed of all the ages. And I shall see her again.

"It is not death, O Christ, to die for Thee:
Nor is that silence of a silent land
Which speaks Thy praise so all may understand:
Darkness of death makes Thy dear children see
Thyself who wast and art, and art to be;
Thyself, more lovely than the lovely band
Of saints who worship Thee on either hand,
Loving and loved through all eternity."

THE SUNDAY PROBLEM

Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.—Prov. 22 : 28.

THAT this mandate has its limitations is no reason for our refusing to give heed to it. Doubtless there do come times when ancient landmarks have to be removed, former precedents reversed, established usage set at naught, outworn law repealed ; but the wise and prudent are slow to affirm in any given instance that the moment for change has come. The man with the sponge must make out his case beyond a peradventure or stay his hand. The man with the hammer may be right, but let him show that he is right before he strikes. To preserve ancient landmarks is a great deal easier than to restore them when they are once wiped out or battered down, and those to whom a threatened fabric is dear can save themselves much future trouble by a little present vigilance.

There exists among us a venerable social institute known as the Weekly Rest. The Hebrew name for it was Sabbath ; the generally accepted modern name is Sunday. The essence of the observance consists in the setting apart in the name of God of one-seventh portion of time, as time is reckoned by days, for absolute immunity from toil. Whether this protected portion of time shall be identified with the first or the last day of the week is a subordinate question. Whether the time thus partitioned off and sheltered shall be devoted to outward acts of religious worship, and what is commonly called "going to church," is another subordinate question ; important, I grant you, immensely important, but still subordinate. As to the

comparative merits of different methods of keeping Sunday, so long as men refrain from toil, there will always be various opinions. The pith of the matter lies in the segregation of a seventh day, not of day number seven. The great fact to be noted is the existence of the institute of the Weekly Rest as such—the Sunday. Here it is, a most noteworthy feature of modern life, an actual present possession, a thing in hand. On what principle, by what methods, ought we, as reasonable beings, to deal with it? Is such a business notice as the following, for instance, a good way of dealing with it:

"Until further notice these works will run from 7 A. M. till 9 P. M. every day, including Sunday. Refusal to comply with this request will be ground for immediate discharge."

This is the ultimate towards which the removal of landmarks tends; hence the value of considering the drift of sentiment and of policy in regard to the Sunday institute, and the more, because those who advocate relaxation in this regard do not see whither they are tending and what will be the result if their views are logically pressed to a conclusion. We may say thus much in order to clear up the issue which just now is confronting the people of our State and of this community.

We are just now asked to sign a petition to the officials of our city "earnestly requesting the closing of all liquor-selling places on the Sabbath day." It is urged that those chosen and entrusted with authority by our people shall take immediate steps, persistent and thorough, to prevent open saloons and drunkenness on the Sabbath day. The great body of our people want our laws enforced. Decency, morality, Christianity, and the fair fame of our city demand what we now ask. To this there has been a favorable response. Some are under the impression, naturally enough, that it is the so-called "temperance question" with which we

are invited to deal. Others are persuaded that the principle at stake is the all-important one of the supremacy of law, the duty of the sworn officers of the State to enforce the State's decree. But this latter question has been, in one notable case at least, set at rest. The matter has, so to say, been carried before the appellate tribunal of the great metropolis, and has been decided in favor of the people and against the interested parties. We are no longer annoyed by the vicious proposition that laws are enacted rather with a view to silencing the murmurs of the good, than for the purpose of restraining the passions of the evil-minded. We now know what a few months ago we did not feel sure of — that municipal law, when there is a will behind it, can be made almost as effective as the sure, swift law of nature.

Equally evident is it, when we look facts in the face, that it is not the temperance question which is now at stake, for no one can pretend that even the complete suppression of the sale of intoxicants, if confined to a single day of the week, could settle that. Temperance legislation, if it would be properly so called, must aim at covering all days. Nay, in all such petitions and manifestoes we read between the lines on which are written "law and liquor," another problem — the problem of Sunday. An attack is making upon the immunities of the Weekly Rest, as those immunities have been defined by usage and by public law. It so happens that in this particular case the hostile movement has sprung up in the quarter known as the "liquor interest," and that is what is confusing people's minds. But there are other points of the financial compass from which the assault might just as naturally have come. The simple truth of the matter is that Sunday is all the while in the position of a beleaguered fortress. Now on this side, now on that, the batteries flash. Both of the twin giants of selfishness — the gaunt one who swears by

money, and the bloated one who swears by pleasure — are confederate against those sacred walls, and the names of their followers is legion. "Many there be," cry the besieged, "that fight against us, O Thou Most Highest;" yet there are those who, undismayed, keep on saying quietly to themselves, "God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed; God shall help her, and that right early."

We may notice just here several points:

1. Sunday observance is no mere specialty of the Hebrew code, no mere survival of a discredited Puritanism, but is, on the contrary, an essential and permanent feature of the morality called Christian.

2. The people of this State are living under the Christian morality as distinguished from all other moralities whatsoever — Mohammedan, Confucian, Buddhist, Roman, or Greek.

3. Because these things are so, legislation which infringes or even impinges upon the Weekly Rest, should emanate only from the body with which sovereignty is lodged, and should never become subject to purely municipal control. In other words, the State at large, and not any constituency of any city, should determine its Sunday laws.

These foundation principles are those which we now desire to emphasize and elucidate. And firstly, Sunday, the Weekly Rest, is, I have suggested, one feature of the general scheme of conduct known as Christian morality. And by Christian morality is meant a scheme or plan of social life which, in its fullness, as we know it, dates from the days when the New Testament was taking shape, but which in reality had an origin far earlier than that. For clear and accurate definitions of what Christian morality is we turn to such utterances as the Sermon on the Mount; the parables of our Blessed Lord; the twelfth, or sociolog-

ical chapter of the epistle to the Romans; the thirteenth or charity chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians and to the ethical chapters of Saint James, Saint Peter, and Saint John. These teachings gradually gave form and color to the lives of the men and women to whose ears they came, until there grew to be recognized in that old Roman world, as a distinct type of character, the Christian character.

But if we insist, as we ought to insist, upon going more deeply still into the question of origins, we find that Christian morality is, after all, only a graft upon a more ancient stock, and that, in order to discover the actual roots, we must dig down into the soil of Hebrew history. From the prophets and law-givers of the Old Testament came the elements of that scheme of human life which is propounded in the New. Nay, we may insist on going further still, until, below the surface soil of Hebraism, we strike the sub-stratum of a primitive tradition contemporary with Assyria and Egypt. The essence of this ancient tradition we find embodied in the Ten Commandments, which were evidently a republication rather than a first announcement of the basic principles of morals, since the offenses against which they are directed seem to have called for mention, and not for definition. Murder, theft, and adultery are prohibited simply by name. Moses takes it for granted that the people for whom he is legislating know what these words mean. The central and distinguishing feature of this high tradition, as to how men ought to live, was the doctrine of the one only and true God, whose will as to the doings of His creatures was to be obeyed, because it was His will.

This doctrine was relieved of all appearance of arbitrariness by the emphasis laid upon the law-giver's respect for His own law. The gods of the peoples who lived outside of this tradition were represented as having one standard for themselves and another for men. They did

as they pleased regarding lust, cruelty, and avarice, but they were swift to punish such of their worshipers as were not punctual with their gifts of wine, and oil, and blood. But the God of Truth had no such double standard. He imposed a law of holiness, because holiness was of His own essence. He commanded men to work righteousness, because He Himself was righteous. If now we take our map of the world and mark with some distinguishing token the countries where, at the present day, there is power — power commercial, social, domestic, personal — power that flows from the leaders to the people, and reacts from the people upon the leaders — we shall find that the countries so designated have accepted, in greater or less completeness, that sacred tradition which, beginning "before Abraham was," culminated in the person and found its perfect expression at the lips of Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.

Of this which we may call the accepted morality of Europe and America it may be affirmed that the protected rest day is an essential part — as essential a part as the law of monogamy and the law of property—and bound up with them in one common destiny. The fact that our Blessed Lord rebuked the men who by their hair-splitting and pettifogging had turned the day from a blessing into a curse, makes nothing in favor of our more modern destructive policy. It is to Him that we owe the very strongest assertion of the universality and permanence of the Rest-Day law ever put forth — "The Sabbath was made for man" — for man in his spiritual, social and physical aspects. Nothing could be more positive, broader, or more comprehensive.

This law, He means, was written by the finger of God in the constitution of man, and it may not lightly be effaced, and so deeply bedded in our being is it, that, if temporarily clouded over, it is bound to reassert itself. You may

remind me that He added yet another sentence to that one — "The Sabbath was made for man" — namely, "and not man for the Sabbath." So He did, and even so He might have done with respect to some other social institutes with which the ten words of Sinai deal. Had He been addressing a company of usurers or covetous people in the nineteenth century, we might easily imagine Him saying with reference to extortion, and sweating, and rack-renting, "Property was made for man, and not man for property." Would such an utterance have proved the Christ a communist, a believer in the abolition of all rights of ownership? Nay, it would have had precisely the opposite signification, for it would have exhibited Him in the attitude of unmasking an abuse by the simple assertion of a use. This was just what He was doing for the fourth commandment — infusing into it, by precept and example, a more spiritual meaning; making it in every way larger, richer, fuller of blessing to mankind, and thus helping to fasten its obligation and deepen men's reverence for it. Such was His policy with reference to the whole moral law.

The Christian morality was, as we have said, grafted upon the stock of the Hebrew morality. Of course, the graft may be expected to bear the juicier and the sweeter fruit, but to say that the Christ annulled the Rest Day, and, sanctioning the other nine-tenths of the decalogue, treated this one-tenth as if it had never been, is to hazard an assertion incapable of proof. Again, we may contend that the people of this State and of this community are living under the Christian morality, as contrasted with all other moralities known to history. And it is not necessary to quote the law books in order to prove this proposition, though that, perhaps, might be more convincing to some minds. We may be content to rest the structure upon what some people would call generalities,

and which, rejected by the legalist and the literalist, will yet be found strong and cogent in the judgment of the many.

I maintain that our whole life as a community, our habits of speech, our standards of taste, our ordering of domestic life, our recognition of reciprocal duties as between man and wife, father and child, brother and brother, employer and employed; our distinction between what is truthful and deceptive, decent and indecent, honorable and base — that the whole social fabric has, not in actuality, perhaps, but as respects the ideal entertained and the standard aimed at, a complexion clearly and beyond all peradventure Christian.

We are content to abide the verdict of those who attach deepest importance to this kind of evidence, which, not written in the books, is graven deep upon all of the relations of our life, and upon all the customs and habits which are found in our complex civilization. We may give over as hopeless the case of those who will never be convinced that this Republic is a Christian land until, by act of Congress, the Deity shall have been recognized in an amendment to the constitution. Back of every organic document that ever was there has lain a vast region of accepted, unchallenged, and, for that very reason, unexpressed truth. The General Court of Massachusetts wrote to the Long Parliament in 1646 — the old colonial times:

"For our government itself, it is framed according to our charter and the common laws of England, and conceived according to the same, taking the words of eternal truth and righteousness along with them as that rule by which all kingdoms and jurisdictions must render account of every act and administration in the last day."

Perhaps what has been called an unwritten tradition of righteousness lying behind all the engrossed legislation of Christendom, never found more eloquent or worthier

expression than in that passage. Yes, this is a Christian nation. If any man doubts it, let him attempt openly to practice another sort of morality than the Christian morality and he will presently discover his error. Some years ago a pervert to Mohammedanism undertook, in a great city, a propaganda, and at the hour of noon for a few consecutive days the Moslem call to prayer was sounded in the ears of the passers-by from a conspicuous position. That was all well enough. Nobody was disturbed, and the traffic of the street went on as usual. But had this missionary undertaken to set up a Moslem standard of domestic purity as that is understood in Constantinople, or a Moslem standard of justice as that is understood in Armenia, he would speedily have made the discovery that the standard of morals accepted in the Empire State is the Christian standard, and none other.

And thus, if it be true, as has been suggested, that this great social institute of the protected Rest Day is part of the moral law of Christendom, it follows that only sovereign power — the power that regulates the tenure of property, the validity of contracts, the conditions of marriage, and the penalty of death — has any right to modify it by legislation. Much dust has been thrown in our eyes by specious talk about "home rule for cities," a taking phrase, if you please, but one, under a system of government like ours, full of peril. Municipal ordinances bearing upon the details of civic administration may properly enough be left to the municipalities themselves to make and to execute, but only the people in their sovereign — that is, in their supreme — capacity, can take in hand a great moral law and say, "Thus, or thus, it shall be modified." It cannot be denied that the application of Sunday laws to great cities in contrast with small towns and villages admits of a measure of variation in view of different conditions. But the right to adapt, the power to modify, lies where the

sovereignty lies, and nowhere else. No municipality can claim the privilege of making its own Sunday laws, or of executing the larger law otherwise than as is written, so long as the city is, by its very charter, under the control of the larger statute. The prerogative of original constitutive legislation can be entrusted to no less a unit than that which we term "The people of the State of New York."

If "home rule for cities" is to give us a continental Sunday in one place, and a Scotch Sunday in another place, and a Canadian Sunday in still others, why not, by parity of reasoning, one definition of larceny and murder in one city, and another in another city? Why not one law of divorce for Albany and another for Ogdensburg? Just now it is the fashion to flout the opinion of the rural or urban portion of the commonwealth in questions where the interests of the great centers of population are involved. But what reason is there for thinking that the dwellers in tenements are ethically so much more highly cultivated than the dwellers on farms, or the residents on broad and shady streets? Whether of the two is more competent to shape the destinies of the metropolis — the solid, old-fashioned, observant yeomanry of the counties, with the traditions and associations of true and positive Americanism, or that other constituency, which is said to contain a compact body of fifty thousand men who can be counted on to vote at the dictation of one interest.

But all this by the way. We are not arguing the question of the probable triumph of one element in our cities over another, or of the comparative electoral strength of the rural districts and the centers of trade. The problem is, whether here in this town we are ready to remove the ancient landmarks, and to allow the violation of that Sunday law which we have made, based upon the fourth commandment; a law affecting some, if not all, of the sacred associations of our homes, and the higher aspirations

and true upbuilding of our children. Our authorities have pledged themselves to aid us in keeping intact the institutions which our legislators have striven to conserve. It remains to be seen whether we will aid them by giving countenance and sanction to their efforts, and by furthering a healthy public sentiment.

But might it not have been better, you ask, to have drawn a picture of the ideal life open to American communities, showing the Sunday nestled among the hard and sordid secularities of our work-a-day existence like a trellised cottage, with its roses and honeysuckles, amid the sheds and slag-heaps of a mining camp? Yes, that is a very attractive way, and we may not try to cast contempt upon it by calling it sentimental. But true sentiment can only survive and flourish after it has been first rooted and grounded in the homely soil of truth and fact; hence, it is better in the long run to enlist reason and conscience on the side of Sunday, leaving emotion to adjust itself as it may.

We may be sure of one thing, that if this precious franchise of the Rest Day be of God, man cannot annul it. If this circle protecting the interests which have made nations great, and men commanding, and homes heaven-like, was really drawn by the finger of the Almighty, no temporary madness of the people can permanently efface it. Meanwhile, for you and for me, if we would be God-fearing, and law-abiding, and patriotic, as citizens and as men, the maxim holds good, "Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set."

THE FORTUNE OF THE WICKED

Behold, these are the wicked :
And being always at ease, they increase in riches.
Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart,
And washed my hands in innocency.

— Psalm 73: 12, 13.

NO one can read the Old Testament without observing that its writers are greatly concerned about the way in which Providence treats the righteous man. They take it for granted that he ought to be favored of God, and that the unrighteous man ought to suffer. But it appears as if God shone upon the wicked and frowned upon the good. The Psalmist complains bitterly that vile men are exalted. The Prophets mention, as one of the signs of the golden age, that the churl shall no longer be counted bountiful. The Book of Job is a profound discussion of the apparent contradiction of justice, and the writer of Ecclesiastes almost lost hope of a world where the same lot is assigned to saint and sinner. When the righteous are blessed, or when the unrighteous are punished, a load is lifted from the conscience and reason of these thinkers, and it appears as if their faith would hardly have any trial were this mystery of the divine government solved.

Perhaps we of the Western Hemisphere can hardly appreciate the force of this complaint to the full, because we have not felt its pressure. We have not known what it is to be wronged and robbed, to be cruelly oppressed, and to suffer the utmost outrage in our homes without protection or redress. While the hope of justice remains, the man

can endure a great deal. When justice sides with the criminal, the victim's blood turns to gall. The fierce energy of our Western civilization has wrought salvation for millions of people, breaking to pieces the power of the tyrant, compelling equal laws, surrounding equity with a wall of fire, casting an irrefragible shield over the helpless orphan, elevating woman, vindicating personal prerogative, guaranteeing liberty. Certain passages of the Bible are obsolete and out of date to us, and indeed are scarcely intelligible. Our fathers knew their meaning. Christians in the Armenian provinces read them to-day with effusive passion and tremendous earnestness. They are the psalms which contain the litanies of the poor, the oppressed, the downtrodden, the persecuted for righteousness' sake. They are the appeals of all miserables in all lands, from heartless money or reckless tyranny, to a silent God, who will not move, who seems not to care; who has, notwithstanding, been partaker of the human Gethsemane, and Himself inspired the passion of this cry.

We have, however, our own quarrel with Providence — although it be on a minor scale — and it frets our souls and dashes the sweetness of our faith. It appears as if, through carelessness or blindness, certain individuals had been confused in the arrangement of affairs, so that A receives the recompense of B, and B is condemned to the lot of A. One man is honorable, high-spirited, religious, faithful. His word is certain. His friends trust him unto death. His family adore him. The world counts him righteous. Here is a man who will have surely riches, and power, and honor, and comfort—who will be crowned with fame before all the people. And instead thereof, his whole life is a struggle with poverty, trials, and obscurity. He is not called to dignity. He is an object of pity.

Another man is selfish, tricky, merciless, mercenary. His promises go for nothing. He has done base things.

No one in private respects him. No one in public quotes him. His name ought to be a synonym of contempt. He ought to be left in the most utter isolation until he repents and acts honestly. Yet, because the fellow has plausible manners, and a fluent tongue, and a cunning intellect, he too often wins his way with the multitude and retains his popularity and lives at his ease. As he drives into the city, the mud from this intriguer's carriage wheels splashes the clothing of honest men.

This contrast may not be common, but it does occur, and it raises questions in our minds about the equity of the divine dispensations. This apparently unmoral situation makes upright living harder for some of us, and proves a hindrance to ethical progress where inspirations rather are sorely needed. Many of us are bitterly conscious of a temptation to do less than our best on this very account, and to demand for any virtuous acts of our own the very best returns. There are some whom no allurements can seduce from the way of righteousness, and whom the spectacle of the slender rewards of goodness will only establish in their integrity. Others are ready enough to hearken to any voice which declares that uprightness and loyalty are only the high road to failure, and that showy and unscrupulous methods are the passport to success. Too many are still exclaiming, "Lord, these many years do I serve Thee, neither transgressed I at any time Thy commandment, and yet Thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends." "In vain have I cleansed my heart."

And there are those who argue that if there be a sense of the distinction between good and evil in the community it ought to receive the sanction and support of the Eternal. As Christians we turn to history and read with relish the downfall of iniquity and the victory of righteousness. In our social life we are ever on the alert for convincing illus-

trations of that unseen power which shapes human life according to the law written in our conscience. What a wanton blow to our poor, perplexed judgment to see a despicable person, whose hand we would not take in the way of friendship, selected for a crown, and a saint, who has been an inspiration to us in many a conflict of the soul, lifted on a cross! Can our commonwealth be blamed if it follows the lead of Providence and sets rascals on high and holds the children of the kingdom in scorn? So it comes to pass that we begin by being concerned about good men, and end by being concerned about God.

Is He also careless whether one choose the higher or the lower way—whether man feed his evil self or keep it down and mortify it? Are fools and cowards, vain and proud persons, the same to Him as those whom He blesses in the beatitudes? This is a very serious question — vital and final. If God be on the right side, then there is not a good man anywhere who will not hold up his head. If God goes over to the enemy, then it seems no use for the rest of us to continue the fight. The impulse that follows on such logic is to fling away our scruples and join in the general scramble.

Of course, we know — so runs the pleading — that God has spoken in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the law of Moses. But what matters it? We also see what God does, and His deeds and His words do not correspond. This is the problem of Providence, and it is not light or trivial, either. But we ought to remember that God has not finished His dealings with those two men and their affairs. It is at the foot of the page that the figures are added, and till the columns are filled up no one can say whether the debtor or the creditor side has the advantage. Life has many surprises, and some of them are very cheering. Knaves come oftentimes to shame and beggary, much to the relief of society. Just men win their dues suddenly,

to the delight of everybody. Wickedness may succeed to-day and to-morrow, and be made a hissing and a reproach the third day. Honor may be set in the pillory and pelted with mud by the thoughtless multitude for a while when the sun shines, and it may be clothed in purple and borne to its throne before nightfall. And if this happy event come not to pass in our time, then the figures will be carried over to the next page and the balance be struck on the other side.

Dives and Lazarus may seem an argument against Providence here in this world. The logic has to be modified when you meet the two men in the next world. God has an infinite patience, and does not make haste. It will be soon enough to judge His ways when they are complete. It is also our misfortune to be dazzled by the glitter of this sphere and to identify the rewards of God with material prosperity. If a man be rich and increased with goods, if he hold high station in Church or State, then it is evident, we say, that God hath blessed him. Could any standard be more shallow, deceptive, unbelieving, ungodly? Could any reasoning be more sophistical? It would seem from such pleading as if the New Testament had never been written, and as if Jesus Christ had never lived in Nazareth, labored at a carpenter's bench and known poverty, shame and scorn. If the teaching of the Christ goes for anything, secular success is no sign of the divine approval. Nay, it may be a very trying discipline. Hardship is no evidence that God is disowning a man. Nay, it may be the most convincing proof of His fatherly love. Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man and an honorable counselor, but he was no dearer to the Christ than Saint John, who was a poor fisherman. Nero lived in a palace and wore the purple, and sent his legions whither he would, and had hundreds of people ministering to his greed. Saint Paul was chained to a soldier and kept to one house, and fed on

plain fare, and he dressed in plain garb, and yet the apostle would not have changed places with the emperor. Nay, when God is pleased, and wishes to bless the men whom He loves, his hands are freighted with gifts for them other than gold and silver.

It is probable, moreover, that the accounts are being squared here and now in another way, though our eyes are holden that we see it not. Is it absolutely certain that our Dives rejoices as one on whom the face of God shines? What of the reprobation of good men, the gnawing misery of self-contempt, the conscious impoverishment of the soul, the haunting dread of the future, the desolation of selfishness, the grief of a lonesome spirit, the starvation of faith, and hope, and love? Are there none who would give all they have won by years of scheming, and gambling, and cornering, and bribing, and wrecking, for a quiet conscience and a fair character among their fellows? Does it go without saying that our Lazarus is miserable because he is not clothed in fine linen and does not dine sumptuously every day? May he not have his own consolations? Surely it is something of a compensation for a severe life and narrow circumstances to be able to look every man in the face, to have the loyal friendship of even a few, to leave an unstained name as the heritage of his children; to hear in the stillness of the soul God saying to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

And again, while each of us has to bear his own burden, many of us cannot be content without adding to our own the burden of other people of the world. We may not judge such sympathy to be light or fantastic, for this were to shut our eyes to the plain trend of thought in a social direction. Some strong thinkers have abandoned the idea of divine government. They say, Man must work out the problem for himself. Some ordinary folk have lost the comfort of religious faith. They plead, "Heaven beyond

the grave is an uncertainty. Let us make one here." Hot-headed people have preached anarchy. Kind hearts have thrown away their enthusiasm on impossible or impracticable schemes. Social reformers are cudgeling their brains over the question, "Why are so many of our brethren living in a hell of our building on this side the grave?" Optimistic dreamers on the problems of time are being rudely shaken from their sleep. In Asia, Mohammedans butcher Christians with every circumstance of brutal barbarity. In America, white mobs hang or burn negroes to their death. In Europe, armed hosts apparently wait the signal to bid stop the dogs of war. Rich people in our great cities grow richer and more luxurious and flaunt their extravagances, their insolences, their vices, in the face of the world. Poor people herded together in the slums grow more discontented and bitter in their squalor and poverty. The ancient fear of God, the old sense of sin, purity of heart, reverence of speech, loyalty to the Father of us all because He is King and Saviour, seems to be waning, and a hundred signs go to prove that pleasure, money, sense, materialism, is fast becoming the object of our worship.

The news from the far countries of the earth, we say, comes between us and our ease, so that we cannot talk, and laugh, and eat, and sleep so pleasantly with such pictures forced on our eyes, with such stories in our minds. More than this, such tidings hinder our full enjoyment even in this house of prayer. But if such wickedness is going on and such agony being endured, it is right and necessary that we should know it. It is selfish and cowardly if we refuse to know it. That man is less than human, to say nothing of Christian, who can walk the streets of one of our great cities at midnight, or read the reports from the submerged tenth or twentieth, without having his heart wrung. Many questions force themselves upon us as we

read of these terrible sufferings of innocent people, or mark the unrelieved darkness of so many lives in a land of Christian light.

But the deepest question of all has to do with God. We are driven past the victim and the oppressor, past human laws and governments, to the source of power and order. Where is God? What is He doing? How does He feel about all this horror? If one of us had the authority, would he not in an hour bring this immense misery to an end? But there is One who has almighty and supreme authority. Why does He make no sign? The love of God and the sorrow and suffering of men — these are the contradictions. Earnest and reverent minds are driven to abandon one side or the other.

And since they cannot deny the suffering, they deny the love. And this means giving up God; for it were better to believe in no God than in a God cruel and indifferent, lifting not a hand though the earth be filled with blood and tears. People who, thinking superficially, or thinking not at all, cannot accept a demon deity, are not to be counted serious heretics. Their disbelief is a tribute to God our Father, who is not a demon. The worst heretics are those who ask no questions and take no interest in the government of the world, because they have comfortable homes and have suffered no wrongs. Theirs is the heresy of Cain, who said, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Their faith is not religion. It is only Pharisaism and selfishness. This fact of world-suffering is perhaps our darkest problem, but it cannot be faced without touching another and an earlier matter. Something goes before suffering, and that is sin. And it is amazing that we make so much of the one and think so little of the other. No doubt there are people in the world who suffer without having sinned, who suffer from another's sin. There are vicarious victims of evil, for no man sinneth unto himself. But it

still remains true that if men had obeyed the law of righteousness written in their hearts this world would not have been Gehenna. Were men to keep Christ's commandment of love there is hardly any form of misery that would not be ended in two generations. It is therefore missing the mark to conclude that this world is misgoverned, unless one be sure that the governor has been obeyed; and, for a fact, we know that God has not been obeyed. Every one does more or less what he ought not to do, and comes into collision with law, and pays the penalty. Sin, and you will suffer, is the law of the race. Sin, and other people will suffer, is law of our solidarity. The punishment of sin is severe, but that does not prove that the world is an anarchy. It rather proves that the world is under the just and strong government of a well-ordered and consistent principle.

It may be said, of course, that this only pushes the difficulty a stage further back, and raises the hopeless question, "Why God permitted evil?" Here the most daring speculator gets beyond his depth and is swept off his feet. We can only be clear on one point — that liberty of choice implies the possibility of choosing wrong, and that liberty of choice is essential to the formation of character. Slaves can be shackeled and imprisoned. They are saved from becoming prodigals, but under this regimen they can never grow to be men. They will remain undeveloped, weakly, neutral; neither good nor evil; mere human chattels. Now, man is not a slave of evil. If he were, he would not be accountable for wrong-doing. He is not even a slave of God. He is a son of God — a member of the divine family in Christ. It is the glory of a son that he is free. It is his perilous privilege to go astray. As a free man he takes the father's resources and departs into the far country to play the fool. He suffers desperately in the exercise of his option. He comes back in rags and wretchedness, and

squalor and filth. But he returns not as he went out, in a sense. He is wiser, stronger, worthier, for his experience. He can build up a lofty manhood on the foundation of discipline past and with the moulding of trial which must be his in future.

If the object of Providence were to secure this race in a garden of Eden, lapped around with comfort, where no one should ever taste hunger, or pain, or loss, then let it be freely granted that this world is a sphere of conspicuous failure. It is so badly arranged and so loosely governed that it would bring scandal on a human monarch. Things are so much out of joint that we are compelled to seek for another more practical theory of life than the perpetual Eden-dream, and we find it in the New Testament. It is not far to seek; it is ready to our hand. The Christ and His apostles teach that the supreme success of life is not to escape pain, but to lay hold through pain on righteousness; not to get, or gain, or possess ease and quiet, but to be holy; not to win things from God because He is more amiable than the devil, but to be like God, godly, because He is true and pure. Those old-time writers of the latter half of the Bible were ever bidding Christians to beware of carnal security and slavery to trifles. They were always rousing us up to surrender and sacrifice. They never complained of their own hard lot. They rather considered it gain. Winds blowing off the snow of the highlands breed a hardier race of men than the soft zephyrs of the tropics. Fierce seas breaking on rocky coasts make skillful seamen. If the mind of God was to urge this race *per aspera ad astra*, up the arduous road that leads to perfection, the dark experiences of this world are an open secret.

On the one hand, it is a shallow optimism that would take a rose-colored view of the world, whose moan of distress is ever in our ears. On the other, it is an inexcusable pessimism that denies to the world any progress in all

these centuries. To-day there are wars at a time and in places; once it was war at all times and everywhere. To-day so many women are the victims of man's lust; once all women were his slaves. To-day a massacre fires our blood; once it was an ordinary event. To-day the poor are at least helped; once they were left to perish.

The agony of one age is the birth of a better life for those that come after. Our advance is at cost of the pangs and throes of many a century preceding us. The martyrs of each period gain some advantage for those who follow. The forlorn hope perishes, but the regiments press on and capture the fortress and the birds build their nests in its cannon. Arnold of Winkelried gathers the Austrian spear-points into his bosom, but the Swiss gain their independence over his corpse. Christ met the devil. It is a ghastly struggle — this world contest for truth and peace, but it is not meaningless, nor aimless, nor fruitless. The day of redemption breaks slowly, and the sun as yet hardly pierces through the banks of black cloud, but the east is glowing and the darkest hour is a memory of the night.

Above all it ought to be a strong consolation to every one, bitter and perplexed about the sorrow of the race, that we do not bear it alone. God partakes of the conflict with us. Whatever might be His wise and gracious purpose, and however necessary and proper might be His means of fulfilling it, it were still a trial of faith to imagine Him watching from a distance and a place of quiet this hurly-burly of sin, and pain, and shame, and despair. It is another thing when He comes through Jesus Christ, His Son, into the midst of the battle, and Himself receives its most cruel wounds even unto death. It is far different when all down the ages He, because He wore our flesh, is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and when in the midst of the throne there is a Lamb, as He once was slain. There is hope and strength in this remembrance, that the

sorrow of the world is the sorrow of God, and that the Redeemer of the world is God Himself.

Better than all, He has set up His Church. He has opened wide the door of baptism. He has called us in. He has spread His table. He bids us draw near and eat and drink and be strengthened, so that sin shall no longer have dominion over us, and sorrow and disquietude canker us ; so that others' troubles shall be ours, as ours are His ; so that He shall be with us and in us, victor over death and hell, and at last receive us where there are joys for evermore.

COURAGE

Quit you like men.— 1 Cor. 16: 13.

IN the original the text is one word, "Be men." Saint Paul is appealing to an instinct, and that instinct is courage. He tells his readers that in becoming Christians they do not cease to be men; that men are manly, and that He came to make them more manly, by making them more themselves. He addresses Himself to man and woman; for in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. Woman may be manly in firmness, decision, earnestness, and the cultivation of her capacities and endowments. She may be less than womanly if she strive for power which shall void her influence, and professions which shall disappoint her ambition, and occupations which are beyond her strength. We may read the text in a form applicable to all. It will be so read as soon as we substitute for four words one word — courage. It lies midway between timidity and recklessness. In matters of spirit and daring there is a deficiency, which is cowardice, and there is an excess, which is foolhardiness. Timidity is a very common thing. Many shrink from pain. Many fly from danger. Terrible, scandalous cowardice is shown every day, when men stand and see an animal tortured or a woman beaten. No less blameworthy the cowardice that silences modesty, religion, and truth; because man fears the contempt of the contemptible; because he is more cowed by the dread of one who shall die than of God who shall judge. Foolhardiness is common. The schoolboy can be dared to any mad

prank. Foolish trifling with life or limb becomes easy when a companion says, "You are afraid to try this or that." Influence, health, character, are readily forgotten, if inclination says to one man, "Go," and appetite says to another man, "Come." Often the foolhardy is a coward as well. The man who will undermine his constitution by excess, and drag death towards him with a cart-rope by his vices, is afraid of infection if his friend is sick with fever, and will make any excuse for passing by on the other side the stranger fallen among thieves.

Nevertheless, we refuse to either of these — to cowardice or to recklessness — the sacred name of an instinct. An instinct is natural, inborn. And nature is brave. She may be perverted to foolhardiness, or distorted by timidity. But no man ever heard of the nation, of the society, of the heart, in which cowardice was honored. Greeks and Romans had but one word for courage and virtue. The soldier who in our own land has refused service in the trenches, or thrown away his colors in the battle, would better not return — whatever his rank — to face the opinion of his country, of his county, of his home. The man who has been driven by selfish terror to leave wife or child a prey to violence or fire, will find himself for the rest of his days, by no sentence of the courts, an outlaw. These things show on which side nature is in this war of courage and cowardice — which of these two is the instinct, and which is the disease and the deformity.

Courage — the power to suffer and the will to do — is the especial idol of the young, the strong, the independent, the aggressive, whether they find it on the battlefield or in the home, on the throne or in the cottage, within the White House or in the slums.

On the walls of the chapel at West Point is a tablet commemorating with others the heroes of the Revolution. It differs from its companions. There is a date of birth

and of death, but no name is written between. It is a way of telling posterity that not far from the spot a man who wore the livery of the American cause sold his country for paltry pelf, and by an iniquitous covenant erased the recollection of his personality from the pages of her history.

But neither young men nor maidens, old men nor children, so long as there is a Christianity in Christendom, will fail to pay their tribute, at least of silent praise, to a nobler and a loftier daring. They will still honor the sincerity which must speak the truth, and the conscience which would go to the stake for duty. Though they blame, though they ridicule, though they call the man perverse, impracticable, self-conceited, yet in the heart's heart there will be a deeper and truer instinct, the while, of respect and reverence. No man can say or sing —

> "Teach me to live that I may dread the grave as little as my bed;
> Teach me to die that so I may triumphant rise at the last day,"

without remembering that Dr. Thomas Ken, the author, chaplain to Charles II, was he who when the monarch would have billeted upon him a part of his retinue, refused to receive as his guest the pampered favorite of royalty, a woman of besmirched name, and had as his reward the homage more enduring if less instant than was rendered to the useful partisan or the complaisant time-server.

We have seen how courage in bodily things may become reckless, purposeless, silly daring. You can trace the same abuse in matters of the mind and of the soul. Is there not sometimes an intellectual foolhardiness, seen in the upsetting of established convictions, in the inversion of historical reputations, in the reinstatement of some exploded error, in the deification of some questionable policy? With how many in these days is courage the whitewash of paradox? With how many leaders and moulders of popular thought does the mere pleasure of startling, of creating

a sensation, of achieving brilliancy, compensate for all the mischief of misleading? The man who by word or writing arrays the masses against the classes is reckless certainly, but he is not more courageous than he who carries lighted candles into a powder magazine. The man who by selfish hoarding or daring manipulation of the markets arouses the antagonism of society and extorts a cry of despair from the widow, and the orphan, and the helpless, is certainly careless of consequences, but he is courageous only as is the burglar, the robber, the assassin.

Both parties forget that the essence of fearlessness is closely allied with a civilization which puts away the torch of war and the club of gain, and promotes the principles of mutual interest, mutual forbearance, mutual toleration.

Many of our present troubles in Church and State have arisen out of this sort of abuse of courage. A doubtful good, a half truth, dimly discerned or distorted by the medium of self-interest through which we look at it, has been seized as the good, the truth, the rest of human disquiet, the panacea of human ill, and a dashing swoop has been made upon it in which the balance is lost and the proportion of things forgotten. Many heresies, many skepticisms, have sprung out of this intellectual bravery so called. It has seemed manly to contradict traditions; spirited to trample upon conventions; independent to speak the doubt, to launch the denial, to adopt the policy which shall neutralize well-established facts and contraverse principles long exemplified.

"At least I will be bold," says the gambler on 'Change, and his compeers and his rivals call him a young Napoleon for his lion greed, his hawk-like quickness, and his jackal rapacity. "At least we will be defiant," say the people who read of his venturesome cupidity, and they lend themselves to any financial scheme which promises to relieve the mortgaged farm and keep from the clutch of the remorse-

less creditor the debt-cumbered home. "At least I will be fearless," echoes the politician, "and show you the way whereby the dammed-up streams of capital may be made to flow out among the multitude, regardless of the law of supply and demand," and he secures from an audience that attention which is due neither to his intellect nor to his knowledge, nor yet to his heart.

The possession of courage is a trust as well as a gift. We must remember that the talent of fearlessness imposes upon any man in public or in private life a fearful responsibility. It is not because I am reckless that I am right. I must prove all things before I speak out for the one thing. Special pleading does not point to large and abiding truth. I may no more be rash in uttering conclusions than hypocritical in hiding them. There is a mental and a moral audacity at least as perilous and tenfold as blameworthy as that which flings away a life in climbing the Alps or ascending in a balloon.

It is not necessary to show you that the same false courage has a yet more fatal place in matters spiritual. Some call it brave to keep the Bible shut, the knee unbent, the conscience unexplored, the life unwatched. It is only the hardihood of sottish blindness. There are those who commend as intrepid the young traveler who sets out upon life's highway destitute of armor and weapon, of map and guide, and proposes to prosecute that perilous journey to the consummations of eternity. Such an one is only rash, inexperienced, ignorant. The man himself, though he has been vanquished fifty times on a particular battlefield of temptation and predisposition, tries his chance there again, where he neither can nor will take with him the only strength in which he can hope to conquer. He is a fool to form a resolution in which his will is not a factor and to which God's grace is not asked to bring support. Things which happen to-day in ten thousand lives are so many

evidences and operations of that twist and bias of the instinct of courage to which the devil looks as his special guarantee of victory in his battle with the human soul.

Friends, Jesus Christ did not come into this world only to exemplify an exceptional courage, only to call forth our admiration for a man spiritually, intellectually, physically brave without hardihood, and valiant without rashness. If He had He might indeed have accomplished the purpose, but the story of the Gospels then would have been an argument for the strong, for the heroic few amongst you; it would not have touched your hearts, nor brought one of you, with his fears, and his wants, and his misgivings, to the footstool of prayer. And if we do not this, then we do nothing. There is an instinct of courage in us all. We may not deny it. There are many counteracting instincts of cowardice. Who will gainsay that?

Courage, then, must be a rare gift to the few, or else a grace acquired only by those who strive. We reverence more — we ought to reverence more — the grace than the gift of courage. If we know a person to be naturally sensitive, susceptible of pain, delicately organized, and therefore quick to feel, we admire far more in him what we know to be an acquisition, an attainment, than we do the stolid, apathetic acquiescence of one who has neither brain to throb nor nerve to quiver. That man may have the gift of courage who, with brutal defiance, like the war-horse of Job, "Mocketh at fear and is not affrighted; who smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting." That man only has the grace of courage who, realizing all the momentous issues of the future, with blanched lips, and palpitating heart, and quickened pulse, stands and meets the foe, or moves forward at the word of command into the very jaws of death. Courage, the gift, is reckless of consequences, and blasphemes and dares. Courage, the grace, is aware of all

the probabilities, and trembles and prays. Courage, the gift, cries, "Who is afraid? Not I, forsooth." Courage, the grace, whispers, "I dare not be a coward; for whatever the inclination, duty to country, and family, and self, and God says, 'You must not.'"

Two men were sent upon an errand in the heat of a battle, and their way lay in the same direction for a time. Said one to the other, "Are you frightened?" "Yes," replied the second; "and if you were half as much frightened as I am you would turn back." The speaker had the gift. The bespoken had the grace of courage. We cannot but gather from the Gospel narrative that the courage of our Blessed Lord was of this nobler, this less constitutional kind. We conceive of that frame as wonderfully sensitive. Such a heart, such a soul — may we dare to say it? — must have made, if it found not for its habitation, a body like unto it: tender to every touch; vividly, thrillingly responsive to each most distant access of suffering; deeply susceptible to every appeal for sympathy. Was He not in this as in all things satisfying our instincts? Was He not undertaking the more difficult rather than the easier task? Was He not showing the endurance rather of the weak than of the strong — rather of the man whose courage is grace?

Thus would we account in part for that shrinking from the hour and the cup which is so marvelously set in Him over against the submission and the self-sacrifice. Thus would we fit together and co-ordinate the two apparently variant sections of that prayer in Gethsemane, "Father, if it be possible," etc.; "Nevertheless, not My will be done." Thus, too, would we see Him one in all things—not with the strong in their strength, but with the weak in their weakness. Thus do we behold Him satisfying the instinct of even physical courage by demonstrating in Himself, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, how they who have

not may have; how they who possess not the gift may yet under His cross drink in the grace.

Wonderful has been the issue well known to us all. You cannot read unmoved, unconvinced, the church's roll of martyrs, of witnesses, who sealed their devotion to the truth with their blood. You have doubtless wept tears of pity, of shame, of emulation, as the story tells of old men bathing their hands with joy in the slowly consuming flame; of weak women, in a more than Spartan devotion, bracing their sons for the sword; of little children going, for Christ's sake, almost from the laver of regeneration to the baptism of blood. True, excitements of natural love, of maddening hate, of meritorious bigotry, have had their martyrdoms in all times. Still, we see a difference, not uninstructive to trace out, between the Christian testimony unto death and any other which history records.

There is a difference in the motive, for here is on the side of Christianity's saint loyalty to God, and there on the side of the world's heroes loyalty only to man—a difference in spirit, for here is love and there is ambition; a difference in hope, for here it is immortal glory and there it is perishable renown.

But there is a courage unsustained by excitement, unsupported by sympathy, in the strength of which Christian men and women have endured in unmurmuring patience life-long pains of want, of weakness, of secret wasting disease, entailed too often in the reeking tenement house or the crowded sweat-shop by man's inhumanity to man. There are those who waken day by day to a dying life, and sleep night by night an unresting sleep on the strength alone, yet sufficient, of Christ believed, known, present; of Christ, the man of sorrows; of Christ, the life and the resurrection. Even physical courage is in Him enough — enough for His people. Such are to-day the deathless martyrdoms of our holy religion.

But the moral courage of our Lord is more pervasive if less conspicuous than His physical fortitude. Here was a man unlearned and unlettered apparently, who dared to confront the doctors, and the thinkers, and the writers of His age; who was bold enough to stand before those who had all that respect which the Church pays to her bishops, and the State to her judges, and say in effect, "You are all in error, and thus and thus are you wrong. I bring you a message from God, and I charge you by your soul's everlasting rest that you hearken. I know that this is a tone which no mere man has a right to adopt."

And there are some who in studying the character of our Lord so confuse the divine and the human natures in Him as to neutralize all that makes Him our living model. They argue that because He was very God, therefore it cost Him nothing to be perfect man. We lose everything when we thus plead. Mere man has met dangers, endured penalties, sacrificed life itself on behalf of this or that which love of power or love of fame has made dear. But it requires perfect man—man whose natural nobility is disciplined, and chastened, and developed by trial; man whose will is in all points subjected to the divine will — to speak out the truth of God in the teeth of the charge of heresy and blasphemy; to sweep away the whole fabric of lying self-righteousness, and to show the law given not to inflate, but to humble; not to separate men into the Pharisaic factions of capital and Saddusaic factions of labor, but to bind them together in one everlasting family of peace and order. Men said then what they say now, that such talk is perilous to morality, a menace to institutions, a death-blow to well-weighed opinions in Church and State.

The popular champion of to-day denounces the hypocrisy and the falsehood, and the selfishness, and the cruelty of existing authorities and teachers, and men shake their heads and say confidence is assailed, notions are upset,

convictions are relaxed; that the vessel which our fathers builded to sail among the craft of the nations must drift without rudder or compass, and risk the exposure of precious souls, and God-given privileges, to every gust and storm of socialistic and anarchistic violence.

The Christ saw, however, what many now fail to see, that the individual citizen of the Kingdom of God and the republic of man, pressed down too frequently by the burden of a complicated civilization, and sighing for the simplicities which a regard for the common weal ought to ensure, must have a voice, a vote, an advocate, a spokesman. He affirmed what you and I are not prepared to accept, that the plow, and the mattock, and the harrow of a complete upheaval must pass over the soil of selfishness, and of fraud, and falsehood, ere the rain of grace can fertilize it into brotherhood, or the sunshine of God bring to ripeness the harvests of charity.

And thus in one great and important point He taught us courage. He bade us never fear truth. No, not even when it seems to be new; not even when it contradicts carefully reasoned conclusions; not even when it offends, frightens, alienates. Truth and *the truth* are always friends. Men sometimes will with foolish words fan discord. They say, "Beware of science, it will undermine revelation." Who dares to say that? Would God have men shut their eyes in one of His worlds — the world of nature — in order that they may see more clearly in another of His worlds — the world of spirit and grace. We can be wiser than that. We can trust Him with both the spheres of His government and His activity. If we cannot profitably study both, at least let us not cavil at those who can. When we have ceased to be narrow, then we may bid the philosopher to be reverent, to be humble. When we have begun to investigate natural things, then we can tell the naturalist how close we are to him, and he to us, and both to God.

And still, but few of us are called to meddle with such magnificent, such gigantic concerns. Our business is less vast and more practical. It is with reference to moral matters that we need most of all to cultivate the instinct of courage. Think of the solemn warnings uttered by the Christ concerning moral cowardice. He bade us not to be ashamed of Him and His words. He taught us not to fear them which kill the body and after that have no more than they can do. He told us there is an hypocrisy of silence as well as an hypocrisy of talking. Hypocrisy is a two-faced, a two-headed monster. One-half of it is simulation, feigning the good which we do not possess. The other half of it is dissimulation, disguising the good which we possess. You may be a hypocrite for lack of moral courage; as easily by sitting silent when others curse, as by opening your lips when others praise.

Young men, young women, therefore pray for the courage never to be ashamed of Christ, and you may light such a candle in America as by God's grace shall never be put out. There is a courage of enterprise as well as a courage of resistance. Christ's soldiers are we — signed with the baptismal cross in token. Christ's soldiers must not always act on the defensive. They must not be rash. The Christian armory has six arms of defense for one of attack. Certainly. But is the Master never to win a new province — never to take up any new ground in this nineteenth century? Is the Gospel to be always hedging and fencing — always concentrating and contracting? Must we be timorously withdrawing our missionaries and limiting our missionary operations, and decrying missionary enterprises? Shall there be no new settlements in the West — no new continents across the ocean added to the vital Christendom which our fathers planted on these shores? Is there to be no spirit, no rush, and dash, and glow, in this, our sworn service as pilgrim soldiers of the cross?

Will you not be instrumental, or principal, in bringing some new soul to Christ? Oh, if each of you gained but one, hundreds would spring up, like Roderick's armed warriors from the bare Scottish hillside. And the spirit of courageous achievement would loosen all purse-strings, and unlock all coffers, and consecrate both men and money, until the world should be Christ's, and Christ should be acknowledged by the world.

Mark, I have not asked one of you to go on a mission. I have not proposed the institution of a single new order, or the organization of one new agency of love. I have not bidden one of you to change his work or to undo the thing that is. But when in the old days one disciple was called, he straightway went and shared the new treasure with his friend, with his brother. Thus the Gospel grew; heart touched heart, eye looked into eye, and rescued souls and transformed lives were the consequence.

But if we are idle and timid in aggression, we are cowards and dastards in defense. We are apt to forget the force of that Scripture comparative. The strong man armed, keeping his palace; his goods are in peace; the occupant is the devil; the palace is the king's house — man's soul. The stronger than he comes and taketh from him, etc.; that is the Christ. Few of us believe it. Most men think the devil is the stronger. It is not wonderful that they should. He seems so to most of us. That evil temper; that vile habit; that wicked thought — I supposed I had conquered it. When shall I know peace? When shall I be more than conqueror? When? When you let Christ teach you courage; when you believe Him to be the devil's master. Victor once in fair fight; victor for you then and with you now; when you call Him in to battle at your right hand and to dwell in you with His might.

All unseen the Master walketh
By His toiling servant's side;
Comfortable words He speaketh,
While His hands uphold and guide.

LABOR AND CAPITAL

Am I my brother's keeper? — Gen. 4 : 9.

THE great problem that confronts us at this time is the social problem. Men are asking on one side, "What are my rights against the circles or the cliques of so-called society — my right to enter into its conclaves and its junketings ; my right to share its interchange of conversation and its give and take of good cheer ? What are my prerogatives against the corporation or the company by which I am employed as a hand or a helper ? What are my privileges as against the trust or the monopoly, which, with its millions, thrusts my thousands out of the markets of the world ?" Or, again, associated man is inquiring, "What are our dues from the laborer or the skilled wage-earner ? To what is he bound in virtue of our contract to him ? How far are we justified, because of sharp competitions and lessened dividends, in keeping down the scale of his pay, or in substituting another for him if there be more demand for our capital than for his labor ?" These are serious questions and they involve dangerous issues. But in seeking for an answer, it is something that there is a general agreement as to the source of our characteristic perils. We are suffering on all sides — and we know that we are suffering — from a tyrannical individualism. This reveals itself in social life by the pursuit of personal pleasure ; in commercial life by the admission of the principle of unlimited competition ; in our theories of life generally by the acceptance of material standards of progress and

prosperity. We have a notable illustration of this latter principle in the recent action of a certain university corporation, which has implied, if not inculcated the doctrine, that an institution of learning should above all things get rich, and therefore should square its teaching and limit the utterance of its faculty by the interests and sentiments of those who, for the time being, are the rich men of the community.

And it is not difficult to see why this state of things exists. The silent revolution which has taken place within this century in the methods of production and distribution has terribly intensified the evils which belong to all later forms of civilization. The invention of machinery has made idle many hitherto busy fingers and feet. The combinations of immense capital have reduced the cost of manufacturing all the articles of every-day consumption. Giant industries have cheapened luxuries and stimulated the passion for them. Greedy, impersonal corporations have either destroyed the human fellowship of craftsman and chief or turned it into a paternalism which dwarfs the man of muscle and puffs up the man of money. Boaz no longer says to the reapers, "The Lord be with thee," and the harvester no longer replies, "The Lord bless thee." For the grain-grower is a syndicate, and the grain-gatherer is a mystic combination of wheels and knives and outreaching arms of iron and deft fingers of steel.

Monopolies have, with corners and deals, degraded trade in large measure into speculation, and buying and selling into gambling on margins. Mighty aggregations of money and of men for personal aggrandizement have driven labor into organization for self-defense. Capital has won a power, and a dominion, and a growth unexampled in the world's history, and perilous to none more than to the possessor. Under existing conditions centralization is inevitable; and centralization, becoming aggressive as it must,

ends in conflicts; and conflicts, where both sides are organized and persistent, introduce the danger of guiding our conduct by an assertion of rights rather than by a confession of duties; of losing life in the search for the means of living; of emptying life meanwhile of everything which gives dignity to manhood and hope to depression.

We need to show to the world the reality of spiritual power; the triumph of obligation over exaction; the claim of what we owe to others superior to what we may demand from others. We must, therefore, in order to hold fast our faith in the day of trial, deepen in ourselves the sense of responsibility for what we have of influence, or position, or money, or capability. We must gain and exhibit an idea which satisfies the thoughts, the aspirations, the aims of men straining towards the light — the light of the better day of brotherhood. We are accountable to our time and generation just in proportion to our endowments or achievements.

The first words attributed to man born outside of Paradise are words which disclose the secret of all social defects and disturbances. "Am I," said the earliest murderer, "my brother's keeper?" And the answer came — from the unfruitful earth, drinking in the blood of the slain, and from the departed spirit, inspiring remorse in the fugitive who could not flee from himself — "You are." And the same answer must come to-day as often as the thoughtless, the self-indulgent, the idle, propose the question. We are our brothers' keepers, even as they are ours. And unless we accept the charge, this world, the scene of our toils, and conscience, the inexorable sovereign of our better selves, will condemn us as Cain was condemned, to empty ambitions and unsatisfying achievements. The law of life is the law of duty, not the law of demand; the law of supply, not the law of exaction; the law of service, not the law of sovereignty.

This law of service, this principle of altruism, is stamped of God indelibly upon all things about us. The unorganized material serves the plant. By the service of earth, and air, and rain, and dew, and sunshine, the wheat-stalk and the oak alike grow to maturity and usefulness. And the grain and the timber in their turn subserve the purposes of the animal world, and nothing exists or is save to minister to some other thing.

We rise to man, and here from the beginning the law is supreme. It reigns in the hut of the savage and in the palace of the king. Wherever the family in any shape exists, wherever the hearth-fire burns and the child is born, the law of service is the golden girdle that binds the household. The mother must serve the child. The father must serve the family. Brothers and sisters must each serve the other, even in savagery. Moving outward and upward from the family to the organized social and political order created by the family which we call the State, we find that, no matter what be its external, accidental form, the same comprehensive statute surrounds it, penetrates it, holds it safe. The entire organization binds each citizen to serve other citizens. The man who digs the coal from the hillside is, perhaps, as far as his thought goes, only serving himself and getting a livelihood. But when I kindle the fire, or light the gas-burner, or enter the trolley-car, he is surely serving me, and if I be a human being the cognate reflection is that he is entitled to a living wage for so doing. The shoemaker makes shoes to earn his bread, but in doing that he keeps the rest of us from going barefoot. The negro behind his mule in a Mississippi furrow little recks that he is providing men with clothing and comfort, but he is nevertheless. The artisan, the lawyer, the farmer, the banker, the ditch-digger, and the merchant prince alike are, wittingly or unwittingly, under the divine law of service. "Sirs, ye are brethren."

God's framing of society is such that a man cannot aid himself without aiding others. We are members one of another. Economic and social difficulties will all vanish when this truth is accepted gladly and willingly. They exist because men have not yet risen to see that members serve themselves best when they serve others; that mutual assistance is the law of civilization, and individual aspiration the law of savagery; that a community where each seeks for himself only is doomed to chaos and eternal night, and would be, could it exist on earth, a hell visible. And so we cannot with impunity treat the miseries, the social antagonisms, the financial polarities of men, as mere excitements, or tragedies, or spectacles, to stir our emotions with a passing spasm, and then leave us just as we were before. These things are our grief, our shame, our reproach, and, as men, we must take them to ourselves. They cry to us with the voice of an awakened public conscience. They show us the dangers with which we are dallying and the momentous moral truths involved in the crisis which seems from time to time imminent. We need to quicken our sense of responsibility. We need also to demonstrate to the world the reality of spiritual as against temporal forces. This we must do, by the help of God, in forms which correspond with the trials and the temper of the age in which we live.

Behind every social question there lies not only a moral but also a religious issue. The final solution of every problem is to be found in the sphere of religion. "You cannot," to use the words of another, "change the fate of man by embellishing his house, or by garnishing him with good clothes, or by providing his table with rich food. We must touch the soul if we are to alter the mode of his living profoundly and permanently."

And if we believe that the Gospel teaches us not only to relieve distress, but to remove it; not only to alleviate

sorrow, but to transfigure it, we must make good our faith in the Gospel by our every-day works. And yet more than this, we have a wider duty. Many who allow that Christianity can deal with individuals deny that it has any message for classes, or cities, or states. The virtues of Christianity, they say, are the petty virtues of private life; its promises, the gratification of the small objects of personal aim. As against the political and social struggles of society, of the nation, of the race, it can at best produce nothing better than a temper of benevolent neutrality. "Christianity never yet settled a strike or had anything to do with solving economic problems," say the objectors. Now, we know that the charge is so far false that all economic complications that have been settled without Winchester rifles, or without starving out the workmen, have been solved on distinctly Christian or ethical principles, through the arbitration of earnest, thoughtful men; but we must admit without reserve that we have given occasion to the criticism. We have not dared, as we should have done, to assert that our faith in Christ, the Saviour of the world, must be the inspiration of our national policy as a Christian people; that discipleship in Christ must be the basis of all compromises and agreements between opposing clans of capital and labor; that the fatherhood of God must be the measure of our social obligation.

It is not indeed easy to determine the special application of these truths. Nay, it is not necessary that we should determine it. But if we cannot lay down rules for the ratification of treaties between centralized money and diffused ability, we can at least affirm eternal principles. Mark in the first place that it is not the temporary quieting of troubles that we need or that we want. All mere expedients for the time being are futile and transitory. The same issues will recur again, unless conditions are changed or new principles introduced. It is not the pacification of

an outbreak or the loosening of a deadlock, but reformation n society and its industries for which we are contending. Such a reformation has its warrant and its justification in three great normal forces, which are, in this country at least, recognized beyond dispute. These three are the moral, the political, and the cosmopolitan, or human. These forces are represented or embodied for most of us in the New Testament, or in Christ, in this Republic, and in that vast moving tide of thought and feeling, not organized yet, which Emerson calls the over-soul, which the Germans call Zeit-Geist, which to us is the spirit of the living God. The oppositions we and others have to encounter in monopoly, proscription, money-worship, corporate despotism, and land-feudalism, are not particularly opponents to us or to the workingman.

These evils must meet and contend with, and kill or conquer if they can, the three-fold antagonism of our hereditary institutions. All the category of tyrannies of which some complain must reckon and settle accounts, not with you and me, but with Christianity, with the Declaration of Independence in its initial sentence, and, above all, with that irresistible power in the universe which "looketh far and wide," and "will take the sun out of the sky ere freedom out of man." A lobby of wealth and privilege, a sordid and plutocratic senate, corporate power committed to a certain policy, may fight shy of the Gospel plainness of speech about many things. They may go to church on Sunday, subscribe to missions to the heathen, build harmless hospitals, invest one per cent in charity and get gazetted ; but they will make sad work of expounding the Sermon on the Mount, His parables, or the epistle of Saint James.

As to our Republic and its original principles of godliness, equality of right and duty rather than privilege, controversy will not destroy it or thrive as long as Christianity

lives and men are men and not slaves. Legislatures, though they spend the taxpayers' money lavishly, and courts, though they issue injunctions wildly, are not yet out of the hands of the people, millions of people with ballots in their grasp. The morrow of closer unity and more equitable government is on the way, and the laborer and the millionaire alike are learning to wait for it with a busy waiting. Meanwhile we can quell in our hearts that spirit of self-assertion which fills us with restless jealousy until the utmost demands which position allows us to make upon our brother are fully paid. We can keep down that spirit of selfishness, miscalled patriotic zeal, which tempts us to think that the power of a nation is the power of one class to dictate to another class, and not rather the privilege of each citizen to serve all citizens, and the privilege of the body of citizens — the State — to serve each citizen. I say, we can do this. It remains for us to confess that we have not done it. We need yet once more to gain and to exhibit a great ideal. We are troubled on one side by a spirit of cowardice, which shrinks from the avowal of lofty aims, and on the other side by the spirit of confidence, which assumes that all will go well toward brotherhood if we will only float with the stream of events.

We talk about noble ideals, and we write about them, and we read about them. As a matter of fact, a large number of people have no ideals. They simply drift with the tide. If the defect were pressed home upon them they would acknowledge it, and they would urge that they lack insight to form ideals and courage to follow them. They would only prove by their apology that they lack faith in man, and that which alone can give faith in men — faith in God. We are very fond of boasting of our progress in many material comforts, and facilities, and satisfactions. Living is an easier matter than it used to be, though life is just the same.

No word is more frequently on our lips than progress. But we are confounding progress with movement. One element of progress must certainly be movement. But movement is not necessarily progress. A train rushing headlong over an embankment has movement. What it lacks is direction. There must be a guide, and there must be a goal to make progress. The "new woman," in the esteem of some, is getting along marvelously. Whether she is progressing or not depends on where she is going. Change, to constitute progress, must be along the line of improvement. In the case of the human race progress must be perpetual. The goal itself is continually advancing, and progress becomes the pursuit of an ideal which ever beckons and forever eludes.

We may be changing, but we are not progressing as a nation unless we have an ideal. The possibility of progress in the larger arena of the world implies a plan in the very constitution of things ; yea, it involves a planner and a ruler as well. Progress in a mindless, godless universe is a contradiction in terms. A man without God does not grow, he only advances. Human history is a drama, not of movement, but of progress. Mankind, on the whole, with many set-backs, has progressed. We stand to-day on a higher plane of civilization, of religion, of humanity, than ever before. The ruins of one nation have furnished the building-stones of the next. And so, like the incoming tide, now advancing and now receding, or like the road from the sea to the mountains, now up and now down, there has been aggression onward, and heavenward.

And whatever may be true of the lower forms of life, of plants and animals, man progresses only by a struggle. The beast may float idly down the stream of tendency and reach his highest good, but man never drifts except to destruction ; nay, man never drifts at all who has an ideal. Man who has an ideal takes up his oars, works against the current,

and, by conscious, intelligent, deliberate, moral effort, stems the tide of mere human, secular movement. Science in its broadest sense, science evolving an ideal, interprets for us a mighty drama. All space is the stage. All time is for the unfolding of the plot. The players are stars, indeed. The author is none other than He that inhabiteth eternity. The play itself is progress. So much can be said of science with God. Science aside from God is fruitful in evils no less than in blessings. It has no progress wherewith to inspire man, because it provides no ideal. True, it increases man's power over nature, man's opportunities for enriching himself, man's resources for animal comfort. But science, thus narrowed down and thus plucked away from God, does not open the heavens and show the glory of God our Father, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. These little fringes and scraps of knowledge which we use to make money, and to sail oceans, and to carry messages, and to light our streets, cannot give us a vision of an eternal brotherhood to fill the soul with a consciousness of its destiny, and bring an assurance of God's sovereign love. It takes the full manifestation of God in the mighty harmonies of nature, and in the Christ, who was the express image of His person, to do that.

Let us ponder more deeply the grandeur of life as it is unfolded through all the ages in which, spite of every partial loss and every temporary check, a divine development of social righteousness has been unfolding. Let us ally ourselves with a humanity through whose discipline and victory, won by sacrifice offered in the ministry of every member, the end of the whole creation may be reached in the peace of an indissoluble unity wherein capital shall not vex labor, nor labor vex capital. Let us enroll ourselves among the men who, each in his appointed place, receive the inspiration of the Master's service and transmit

it, enriched by their own sacrifice, to a new generation of ministrants, and enter, living and dying, into the joy of their Lord.

The sense of responsibility, the energy of spiritual force, the power of a divine ideal, all entering into the brotherhood of man in Christ — how can we gain them? To this question of all questions there need be no uncertain answer. The Christ is revealing Himself through the very difficulties which perplex us. He is waiting for us to apply the teaching of His person and work — of what He is in reference to man, and of what He did for man. We can see now, as they of earlier times could not, how there has been a law in the growth of the race; how man was taken from himself by the ancient organizations of the state; how he was taken from the world by the dominant religious communities of the middle ages; how he has been taken from society by the isolating narrowness of many forms of post-reformation religionism; and seeing this, we can see also, when we let the incarnation of God in man give its perfect message to us, that man is given back to himself, to the world, to society, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

This power of the living Christ is the revelation which we have to embody in an everlasting brotherhood which shall teach by manifold experience the strength of social relationships and social obligations in commerce, in politics, in religion; a brotherhood which shall claim for the individual, the family, and the nation their proper parts in preparing the Kingdom of God on earth, and in bringing to redeemed humanity the fullness of its life in Christ.

THE MINISTRY OF PAIN

Rabbi, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? — S. John 9 : 2.

WHEN the disciples of the Christ were one day arrested by the sight of a blind man sitting in his pathetic helplessness at the door of God's temple, and asked the Master the meaning of his calamity, they touched a problem which is fresh in our day, and which has ever in it the blood of the human heart. Every city is studded with hospitals, where hundreds have begun to suffer or have suffered long No inconsiderable number of one's acquaintance have never known the joy of full health, but are daily contending against some secret weakness. In our own family there may be a member cut off from the activities of life, who all day long is wearying for the night, and all night long is watching for the dawn.

What does this calamity mean? Surely it is not natural that men, and women, and little children should be blind, or maimed, or paralyzed, or in any way crippled. Rather, people ought to be strong and buoyant, able for all the labor and all the pleasures of life. Why should a certain proportion of the race be called out to live in Gethsemane? This is the problem upon which honest-minded and truth-loving men desire light, for their own sake and their brethren's sake.

Various answers may be given, and each may satisfy some mind, though none would satisfy all minds. It can be urged, for instance, that there is no problem, because a

problem means a difficult principle which can be solved, while this matter of physical suffering is an accident, easily traceable to certain agencies and instrumentalities of nature or of man's devising. Until the delicate processes of the material world and the complicated activities of human life perform their parts with unerring accuracy there will be failures and calamities. Nature is a huge and intricate machine, from which each person is thrown off like a piece of cloth from a loom. We watch the whirling wheels and the flying shuttles with some idea of their construction, but with no power to interfere with their operation or to direct their movements. A wheel drags ever so slightly, a thread has a rough edge, a trivial flaw exists in the material, and a whole fabric or a section of it is badly damaged. So one of us begins life at a disadvantage, and this can only be avoided by a series of miracles going back, say, a century.

"To make a character," said a noted American writer, "begin a hundred years before the man or woman is born." Some day a signal-man, being overworked or out of sorts, pulls the wrong handle and a train is wrecked with physical consequences to two generations. An infant not yet born may be a cripple for life, but nothing could have saved that child except miraculous interference in that signal-box. And God is not prodigal of miracles, even to avert far-reaching catastrophies. His Providence comes in later to utilize them for His own purposes. His grace sanctifies them to spiritual issues. It is not wonderful, considering how fine and sensitive is the eye, that some people are blind. It is amazing that more do not lose their sight. Yet, God works no miracles to protect the organs of vision. He only adjusts the lids and teaches us how to use them as guards or shields, and how we can best economize the powers of the eye.

Or, it may be pointed out with irresistible force that suffering can be traced, often over a long stretch of time,

to sin, and that it is simply one of the wholesome sanctions of law. It is a fine provision of the economy under which we live that we cannot transgress any rule or principle without suffering for it. We live in a moral universe, in a state where it will be made pleasant to do what is right according to law, and unpleasant to do what is wrong according to principle. If we play the fool in physical matters in reference to our bodily nature, and contravene nature's precepts or slap her in the face, the powers of nature will take up the quarrel and pursue it to the end throughout the generations till she has obtained complete satisfaction. If one make a covenant with nature and keep her laws loyally, this power will remember him for good, and his children after him, opening her hand and blessing them with health and strength. With her saving judgments and her abundant mercies nature fences up the way of life that we may be induced to walk therein with unfaltering step. And if any one break through the hedge it is good that he suffer, and it would be very disastrous to his sense of responsibility if he did not.

And if so be that the actual transgressor does not pay all the debt, but that the innocent must share his liability, this is only the inevitable consequence of the solidarity of the family, of the oneness of the generations even in their severalty. None can interfere between the sinner and his penalty, and we can even see that it is well none should, for thus the unity of the race would be broken and the pain which leaves peace behind it be foregone.

One also recognizes that suffering is a choice instrument for shaping character, and that without it the most delicate and beautiful stamp of the individuality would be impossible. It is an actual pleasure to look at a perfectly healthy man who sleeps undisturbed and works without fatigue ; whose blood bounds in his veins, and whose vitality is inexhaustible, and who revels in the joy of being alive. He is ex-

cellent company for men of his own kind. He has a buoyant, optimistic, effusive, sympathetic, inspiring sort of nature. But he has his limitations. He is not an easy man to reach with Christ's Gospel, for he is entrenched behind his fortunate experiences and his good-natured contentment. He is glad to know that there are promises for broken-down people, but things have gone well with him and such promises have little weight in his judgment. To such a man the next world will be remarkable if it excel this present state, which in his favored past has been well arranged and is entirely satisfactory. Abstractly considered, no doubt the soul is superior to the body, but he cannot forget that his body has served him perfectly. His unshaken and exuberant health and spirits have been invulnerable against every spiritual appeal. It is not to this Samson that the vision of the unseen comes, but to Saint Paul, with his perpetual thorn in the flesh; to Saint John, cast as a dry sea-weed on the shores of Patmos. Nay, rather, spiritual outsight and insight seems to be the portion of Lazarus at the gate, or Æneas, who never had walked; of some bed-ridden woman in the slums, or some maimed brakeman in the hospital.

When one wants to hear the secret things of God, or to delight one's eyes with the finer shades of grace, he leaves the market-place and visits some one who wrestles daily with cruel pain and has come to know death as a familiar friend. The oil that lit the lamps of the elder sanctuary was crushed from the olive. The gold plates that adorned the altar were of beaten gold. The blighting frost brings out the rich coloring of the foliage. Without the last touch of pain the perfect sweetness and rich, spiritual tinting had never come to certain natures. More than this, it cannot be denied that without the stimulus of suffering the race had never started on its upward career. When the early physical processes had done their work and man appeared

as an animal, with the soul inbreathed of God Himself, he was, apart from morals, simply a savage — naked, idle, ignorant, useless. He had plenty to eat, and needed nothing to wear, and had no cause to work. As soon as he was cast forth from Eden, with the sentence of death upon him, and found the cursed earth bringing forth thorns and briers, and the fruits no longer growing without sweat and toil, he set himself to labor; he began to rise, and the compelling force was the prick of hunger and the restless inspiration of sin. The fair house of human achievement contains now many treasures of letters and art, but the foundation of much of it was the hard and inevitable struggle for bread. The hoe, the mattock, and the plow were the forerunners of the pen, the lyre, and the brush. If a vagabond of the city is ever to be civilized he must first of all learn honest labor. He must, like Adam cast out of Eden, cease to expect something for nothing. The free lunch counter must disappear from his vision. The one certain persuasive is hunger. When the fiercest of all pangs seizes him he will bestir himself, and so soon as he puts his foot on the lowest round of the ladder he has started on the right way, and either he or his children may reach the top some day. Pain is the spur which drives the race along the ordered path of progress.

All these uses and benefits of pain are, however, open to two criticisms. Some forms of suffering are ethical; that is, they are moral in their general intent and purpose, but they are partial in their operation. The same illness or bereavement that purifies one person hardens another. The same fire that melts wax to plasticity bakes clay into brick. But the fault is not in the fire, but in the nature and consistency of the clay and the wax. The difficulty is not in the purpose and object of suffering; it is in the man who will not yield his will to the will of God. But there is an intent of pain which

will affect men generally and ethically. It is a principle that applies to us almost without exception. A congregation made up of well-to-do and easy-going people whom the preacher has sought to move to the pity and service of their fellow creatures, perhaps to very little purpose, are coming out of church on a Sunday morning. Just as they emerge from the building, a runaway horse knocks down and tramples upon a young child. She is only a waif of the city, nameless and not lovely, who has been to the park and is trudging home with a few buttercups in her hand. Her misery and suffering are nothing compared with the vast spiritual deprivations of the world with which the preacher has labored. No matter. At such times the people do not criticise nor calculate. A little maid has been hurt and her calamity conquers the heart. People are instantly shaken out of their composure and run to her aid. Women forget their finery and wipe away the blood. Men abjure their dignity and rush for a doctor or an ambulance. Everybody, however stoical or impassive, wants to do something. A whole company is of a sudden delivered from its selfishness and inspired with human, brotherly interest. Every sin — pride, vanity, hardness, envy — is suspended. Every virtue — love, sacrifice, gentleness, humility — is called into exercise. What could not be done by the eloquence of the preacher was accomplished by the suffering of the child. A whole crowd has been suddenly raised to practical sainthood by a casualty.

The same effect is produced frequently upon a congregation by Hospital Sunday. Upon a question of dogma or exposition an audience may be divided, or may listen with languid interest; but let the preacher put the humanities of the mission field and its ministrations to the bodies and souls of men, or let him paint genuine cases of suffering such as any hospital or lazaretto affords, and the people are ready to give, and embrace the opportunity eagerly.

Men of no creed or of every creed meet around the suffering of the missionary family, or the wan occupant of the ward cot, and are nearer to one another, and nearer to goodness, and God, and Heaven, than at any other time in their lives. Jealousy and bigotry — the most unconquerable of sins — together with every other evil work, are held in subjection for a time and vanquished by compassion and sympathy.

Such conspicuous and undeniable instances of daily life suggest that one at least of the ends of suffering is not the effect on the sufferer, but on the world. One at least of the missionary agencies which God uses most effectively is suffering. If sin be indeed the constant and unscrupulous preference of one's self before the interest of every human being, and if the consequence of this habitual selfishness be an utter and hopeless hardness, then half the battle will be gained when the individual is shaken off his self-center and moved to the service of others. As soon as the lowest nature has forgotten its own desires, and even for five minutes has lived for another, the grip of sin has been loosened and the work of religion has begun. And it would be difficult to name any influence which so swiftly and effectually allures one out of self and so warms the blood with generous emotions as the appeal of pain.

It would be easy to accumulate instances illustrating this principle. It is a dark dispensation of Providence that a tender and gentle woman, a wife and mother, should be nailed as it were to a cross for ten years. But when you turn from this martyr to her household there is light. The father — quite a commonplace man once — has been redeemed from coarseness of soul, and has attained to the knowledge of the deep mysteries of life. Her sons have escaped the unconscious selfishness of youth, and have learned the habit of chivalrous service. Her daughters have been deepened in character and have been lifted above a hundred petty follies by the sight of her suffering.

Neighboring households have not suffered, so they are counted fortunate. But neither have they such delicate sensibility, such spiritual insight, such ingenuity of sacrifice, such an atmosphere of love, such a depth of peace. For the cross has been set up in this family and they have lived under its life-giving shadow. Hence, it is uplifting to minister to the sick and receive an inspiration from them, and no class of men and women have larger opportunities to realize this and accept all the accruing benefits from it than those who are called to deal constantly and professionally with cases of human suffering. Cut off from the ministration of the Word and sacraments, laboring while others worship, beset by various trials of faith in the search of the scalpel for the soul of man, none have greater opportunity to fulfill the Sermon on the Mount and exhibit the Christlike spirit than the physician and the nurse. Spite of all spiritual privations, he or she enjoys powerful compensation and receives an influence wonderfully counterbalancing the losses in the contact with suffering from day to day, till under the necessary composure of manner and a professional repudiation of weak sentimentality the heart has been shaped to pity and the will to service. They who serve unceasingly before the altar of suffering have their reward in a way and to a degree that few can compute.

This beneficent end of pain has its chief illustration in the "Man of Sorrows." It goes without proving that no one has ever so affected our race for weal as the Master Himself. If salvation be by suffering, it comes from Him. Partly it is the humiliation of His holy life and partly it is His gospel of suffering service that has entered the heart of man and quickened the harvests of human obedience and filled the granaries of golden consecration. It is the Crucified in the unutterable pathos of His passion and His death who has overcome and gotten Himself the victory.

From the cross flows the light of life. From the crucifixion comes the powerful sovereignty of suffering. The cross is inspiration and help. The crucifixion is inspiration and mastery. The cross tenders a throne. The crucifixion puts on a crown.

Had one lived in His day and realized His excellence, the cross would have been almost an insuperable obstacle to faith. Why should He have had a diadem of thorns? Why should He have had mockery and the scourging, the robe of scorn and the reed of royalty? Had the veil been lifted from the future, none so blind in His generation as not to see salvation flowing from the five wounds and to attain comfort and contentment. No one then imagined that through the mystery of the Lord's passion so great a blessing was to come to all ages, for none in that day had entered into the secret of His suffering or appreciated the eminence of His condescension.

To-day we are perplexed by the passion which is not now concentrated, like a bitter potion, in the cup of one divine person, but is distributed in the earthen vessels of ordinary people, and we stand aghast at the pain of the victims. Were we privileged to detect spiritual effects, then we would understand and cease to complain. We would see the hard crust of human nature broken up, the fountains of fine emotion unsealed, the sins which sap the vigor of character eliminated, and unconscious virtues brought to bloom.

Before the widespread, silent, searching appeal of the suffering — each in his appointed place — the heart of the race grows tender and opens its doors to sympathy and love. This mission of pain may well be a quick consolation unto them who are its victims. They mourn at times that to them is refused a share of the labor of life, and that they are laid as a burden on their friends. It appears unto those saints in their patience that they are a reduction on

the sum total of life, and a daily drain on human kindness. They make too little of themselves. They do not understand that they are one of the potent forces of salvation. What no ordinary means of grace has been able to effect for members of their household and a circle beyond, they have wrought. From beds of weariness, as from a cross, they have done mighty works, and in weakness they have been more eloquent than the voices of the preachers in public places. To-day they are broken in body so that friends have to lift the cup to their lips. By and by they will slip the body of humiliation, and they will need strong arms in that day to bear their reward. They have gone forth weeping, and sowed their very life in the cold and windy spring-time. They will return rejoicing, and they will be bowed down once more, but only beneath the burden of the golden sheaves. With their Lord they also have seen the travail of their souls and been satisfied. By His grace and in their measure they have filled up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ.

THE SINS OF THE TONGUE

The tongue is a fire.— S. James 3 : 6.

NO more apt figure could have been selected to represent the wondrous power of man's organ of speech. The tongue is a servant through whom we exercise sway over all animate nature. Its accents can win to our feet the most powerful of the beasts of the field and render them completely subservient to our will. It guides the motions of the horse and enlists his sympathy so that he helps our weakness and becomes almost our companion. The dog listens when we caress and cowers when we menace. We bind him to us with cords of love until he is our guardian and our friend. The tongue is master in the realm of humanity. We wield a dread influence over our fellows through its use or its abuse, through its helpful sovereignty or its dangerous and grinding tyranny. It can melt to tenderness or rouse to fury the mysterious passions that slumber in human breasts. It can move to murder or calm to peace, enchain with eloquence or lash with invective, sting with satire or please and soothe with flattery. Wind and storm, sunshine and gentle breeze, lightning and golden mellow cloud vie with it. It attracts, repels, shatters, entrances, scathes and fascinates, wounds and binds up, destroys and raises again. Life and death are in the power of the tongue.

And if these statements can be predicated of man in his fallen condition, how far more wonderful the majestic sway that he exercised in the day when, the whole animate

creation gathered before him, he gave them the names whereby they should be distinguished! Peace and harmony reigned supreme in the universe of nature as in the universe of mind and spirit, and that glorious enrollment was perfected while the lion and the lamb, the leopard and the kid gazed one upon another in acknowledgment of the tender and gentle rule of man. But even as the giant oak loses the crown of its pride before the awful career of the hurricane and bears down to earth the shrubbery at its feet, so man, when the image of his Maker in him was marred and defaced by sin, introduced discord into the harmony of nature, caused the earth to bring forth thorns and briers, and sent hither and thither among the brutes the barbed arrows of discontent to make them rage, and fight, and devour one another. They do not now obey as once they obeyed. They must be tamed, and trained, and chastised, and often affrighted. They must be enticed, and entrapped, and enslaved, and inspired with the fear of man as of a tyrant. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, awaiting the time when as in Eden the reign of righteousness and peace shall gather them in one and they shall no more fight nor devour in all God's holy mountain. The parable and the prophesy of that glorious hour is in the sovereignty of human speech guided by human reason. In the nature of man this faculty may represent to us the second person in the Godhead.

Man's reason was framed in the image of God and our Lord was called the Word. These are the two scriptural intimations which guide us by the hand into part of the truth respecting the divine nature. Reason involves a thing distinct from itself — namely, speech, or the power of communicating the processes of reasoning; so that whosoever has the faculty of reason has in the faculty of reason the faculty of speech or of the Word, even though, as in the case of a mute, articulation may be impossible.

Reason wraps up speech in itself, yet we can conceive of reason as energizing latently, and of the faculty of speech as having no exercise. Man's spirit, the Bible tells us, was made in the image of God's nature. And in man's spirit inhere two faculties at least — reason and speech. The Son, or second person in the divine nature, goes by the name of the Word of the Father ; that is, He stands to the Father in the same relation as that in which the word, or utterance, or speech, stands to the reason or the understanding of man.

And again, speech is not only the reflection of the discriminating, discursive ability in us, but it is a correct portraiture of character even as the Son of God manifests not only the divine wisdom but the divine love and mercy. We are kind according to our utterances among men. We are harsh or cruel if our conversation is unkind and our criticisms severe. We are impure if we delight in foul and loathsome suggestions and intimations. We are gluttonous and intemperate if we are known to occupy ourselves with words of greediness and discussions or speculations upon unseemly conviviality. Out of the abundance of the heart, the fullness and thorough individuality of the affections, the aims, the aspirations, the purposes, the mouth speaketh. The tongue is a fire in its capacity to stamp the moral features which it represents upon others under due control, and with the seasoning of grace it warms, attracts, blesses, drives out the cold inspirations of the world, melts away the bars of enmity, pours balm upon the wounds of oppression and tyranny, and lifts both speaker and bespoken into a higher and holier atmosphere.

Let loose and barbed with evil passion it can drive its victim to desperation, scorch his soul with blasphemy, close his ears to the call of mercy, and make him shrink from the mildest touch of sympathy and affection. It can burn so deeply and so painfully that man is thereby de-

moralized in his affinities, poisoned in his judgment and alienated from his brother man. It can so effectively mar the image of his Maker in the speaker that he whom he addresses will lose his faith in the divine inhabitation, his confidence in the divine mercy, and his desire for the divine association. The tongue allows the object toward which it flames forth no shelter from the finger of scorn and the prey of popular displeasure. It makes the scorned man more scornful through the very bitterness with which it scathes him. Age and sex, youth and gray hairs may excite no pity. The tender, shrinking sensibility of the woman and the innocence of the child may be no protection, and, worse than all, the fury of the assault is calculated to desiccate the last drop of human sympathy, and to inspire young and old with the harshness and cruelty of spirit of which it is the vehicle and the evidence.

Holiness of life may be singed and darkened until the acts most inuring to the glory of God and the benefit of His church and best reflecting His grace may lie before the eyes of men as the inspiration of the arch fiend himself. "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils," is a sneer that has found an echo in the heart and a representative upon the lips of many who would scorn the title of traducer, or slanderer, or blasphemer; but while it shows a most unenviable spiritual status in the speaker, its worst result may be in the life of the man or woman against whom the sneer is directed, for not many are willing to meet it with the gentle, forceful logic of the Son of God; not many are willing to go patiently forward, challenging all such with the persistent spirituality of aggressive effort and with the calm dignity of a holy life. Let us beware how we bandy about our estimates of human character, for that which with you is the rising of honest indignation at some marked defect or flagrant transgression may, caught from your lips, go forth to harden your fellow creature in im-

penitence or to goad him on to ruin, and this in addition to the reactionary mischief which the remark may effect in your own case. "Judge not and ye shall not be judged," means not that we may not assess our neighbor's acts as good, or bad, or indifferent, but that a carping, caviling, censorious disposition, which always looks for and expects to discover evil in others, not only portrays a diseased, unholy state of heart, a selfish, narrow, unlovely sort of mind in the speaker, but graves deep a corresponding result in the conceptions, and the thoughts, and the character of the other, so that in the ordering of God's Providence the stroke recoils upon the uncharitable man and intensifies and aggravates the human estimate of his cruelty and the divine discrimination against him. His fellow beings pass sentence upon him as untrustworthy, and God his Father must be displeased because he has projected his own obliquity upon others and thus has prejudiced the operation of the Holy Ghost in them.

"The tongue is a fire." Let us notice how and how far the principle of the ninth commandment obtains in this case. That principle succinctly stated is this: We shall in no respect injure our neighbor's reputation. It will not be denied that reputation is a very precious treasure. Money will not buy it, nor restore it, nor value it, nor compensate for its loss. Life would not be worth having if a man had no sort of credit in the society in which he moves; if he stood low in the esteem of every soul which forms the circle of his acquaintance and his association. The commerce of the world would come to a dead halt if the exchange did not know that behind a merchant's moneyed competence, and enfolding it, and towering above it, is firmly fixed his reputation for probity and honor, which would be the same in principle though his last dollar were swept away. To be respected by others who know us, to have some influence with them, to carry some weight, this is itself a form of

life, and it is an honest, commendable ambition to attain it, and it is a praiseworthy pride to press it to fullness of growth and to hand it down unsullied.

"We have three lives," says Saint Francais De Sales: "a corporal life, which stands in the union of soul and body; a spiritual life, which stands in the grace of God, and a civil life, which stands in our reputation. The corporal life is stifled by murder, the spiritual life is stifled by sin, and the civil life is stifled by slander, which is a species of murder, inasmuch as it destroys a species of life." This is most true. A blow aimed at a man's reputation injures him quite as effectually as a blow aimed at his body, and most men are far more sensitive to the first of these injuries than to the second. They dread the tongue of the calumniator more than the weapon of the highwayman. The name of "accuser of the brethren" is aptly given in holy Scripture to the author of all evil, and the title is illustrated by his effort to ruin Job's fair name in the court of Heaven. The slanderer acts in imitation of the devil. "He is a liar and the father of it," said our Lord of satan; and he has a progeny who are close imitators of him.

But the ninth precept of the law reaches to sins which fall far short of slander. Slander is a false assertion to the detriment of our neighbor's character. But in fact any assertion which damages his character is forbidden, whether it be true or false, for the simple reason that while the commandment alludes in terms to false — that is, to utterly groundless — testimony, a substantially true assertion may be untrue in the general impression created by it. The bare fact alleged may be true enough, but if none of the evidence in favor of the accused and none of the extenuating circumstances be placed side by side with the fact, we violate truth in the general effect of our words upon the hearer, though the particular details of them may be correct. If we exhibit a man's vices only and conceal the proportion

which those vices bear to his virtues, we calumniate him quite as effectually as if we ascribe to him a vice which he does not possess. A man may have a defective feature or features and yet the general proportion of his person may be so good and the general cast of his countenance so pleasing that the ill effect of the features which are awry is either modified or entirely carried off. It is an untrue representation of that man to say that he has too prominent an eye or too thick and coarse a lip ; this may be true, but it is not a fair because it is not a complete description of his personal appearance.

And similarly if my neighbor has been overtaken perhaps by surprise in a grievous fault, and if I, for want of better matter to entertain my company withal, blaze abroad this fault of his, but am wholly silent regarding his good character up to that time and as to the prayers and struggles against that particular sin which he may have made, my witness against him becomes certainly false in the general impression created by it, and therefore may be as mischievously injurious as if I had stated what was not matter of fact. It is exceedingly difficult to comprehend the personal environment of our dearest friend. We cannot grasp in a day, or a month, or a year, the peculiar force of a temptation to him. It may never have been a temptation to us, because our associations have been different and our personal endowments of another sort, but the time may come when poverty, or distress, or calumny may bring it home to us with telling effect. The occasion of spiritual defection in another may be better understood if we have ever learned from our own besetting sin how easily we yield when satan attacks a vulnerable point in our own individuality. The disclosure might have been even less favorable, supposing that we had been exposed to a like assault in a corresponding direction.

In a word, if a fair account of a man's faults and sins is

to be given in conversation the common rule of justice must obtain, that evidence shall be heard for the defendant, and thus, after due balancing of all the points at issue, a true verdict be rendered. But this side of the case is never heard, nor does any one represent the interests of the accused or plead his cause, so that the statement of the jury or their opinion is never altogether correct or in accord with the facts, and is frequently utterly false.

And akin to this lies the difficulty of assessing rightly the general result of a man's individuality when such is under discussion, or of discriminating between the whole man and a part of him. None of us can tell how far the marked, strong, overmastering traits by which he is known to us are controlled and tempered by other traits, nor can we calculate how much more prominent they might be but for counteracting influences. The best of men are not thoroughly consistent. Hardly any human being but will reveal weak points on close scrutiny. There is a too much and a too little in most of us. Our composition is not even or equable. It is in pieces and patches. We do not often see principles and affections, temper and spirit, motives and conduct, feelings toward God and feelings toward man, alike and equally under the divine sway. There is want of unity, coherence, combination, harmony in our neighbor's constitution. He has hard angles and we run up against them, irritating eccentricities, ways which thwart our ways. He is vain and conceited, or cold and reserved, or ungracious and even rude. He seems constantly to turn towards us his unlovable side, and it is this side which we call both sides — himself.

Yet these deficiencies and extravagances are not his entire being, nor even the deepest and most essential part of it. He is accessible to compassion and sympathy in some one point or probably in many points, and it is this profound accessibility to high and holy influences to which

God appeals and upon which you and I are bound as His children to work. And as the skillful disciple of high art studies to place upon the canvas not the literal resemblance of the features as they appear in the wear and tear of daily life, but the characteristic expression or soul which gleams out only once or twice in a term of years, so the true Christian aspires to the capacity in word and deed of making the most of all with whom he is thrown, and of eliciting in them those traits of heart and life which attest their relationship to God.

Lastly, all the elements of mischief just noted are summed up and intensified in the case of the talebearer and the gossip. Such an one can hardly escape the charge of being a detractor, but whether they go so far or not, great mischief may be done by disclosing private confidences or things which had better be so considered. "I would not tell anybody but you for the world," is the usual formal prelude to such communications, but it is said too often to make it of any avail as a safeguard, and often enough to make it represent a most colossal falsehood, and with an expression and intonation which stamps it as the hollowest conventionality to both speaker and addressed. Such confidences so betrayed are generally of the pettiest and most insignificant kind. They live, move, and have their being among an idle, thoughtless people, who are busybodies without being busy in anything useful and tattlers without having a great deal to say upon topics of real interest.

And because of the usually contemptible character of such gossip, because it covers an infinite scope of small rumors and unimportant chit-chat and infinitesimally trivial bruitings, all the way from the price of a bonnet to the equipage of an official, therefore it is not sufficiently considered how real an enemy to society is the man or the woman who indulges in it. One great difference between God's estimate of sin and ours is, that God considers a sin in its

tendencies and natural operation, apart from all the checks and hindrances which impede its development. Man, on the other hand, judges of it not by the mischief which it has a tendency to do, but by that which it actually does. To see the full evil of reporting conversations in which we have taken part or confidences, as such, to which we have been admitted, we must consider what the result to society would be if every one did the same. It is dangerous constantly to quote remarks which we have heard and to give the names of the speakers, because even if we report them correctly they are liable to misrepresentation and misinterpretation before they have been many times repeated, but there is comparatively little temptation to such a policy on the part of the many.

But, suppose that the sins of the early life of any man, known only to family and friends, be searched out, dragged to light and, without extenuation or accuracy of detail, blazoned abroad after he has attained to eminence and usefulness. We know that the result in the case of more than one public character has been most disastrous, not only compromising him in the respect which he ought to inspire and the influence which he ought to wield, but shamefully vilifying him in the tenderest of all relations, and wickedly falsifying him in a sphere where vindication is impossible. The inevitable consequence must be failure to trust such an one on the part of thousands who would gladly point to him as the synonym of unimpeached purity and honor. Suppose that the priests of the church thought themselves at liberty or took the liberty of divulging the secrets of burdened consciences entrusted to them in confession ; suppose that the secret history of many a family which stands well before the world were divulged by one of its members : unquestionably the disclosures would be read with puissant avidity by millions of readers and would be coined by enterprising journalists into thousands

of dollars; but what becomes of that confidence between man and man on which the whole social fabric is built? Belief in man by his fellow, which is the foundation of all the social virtues, and is the result as it is the support of faith in God, would, under such a process, be at an end forever.

"The tongue is a fire," but where no wood is the fire goeth out. Where no talebearer is the strife ceaseth. Our western land has been from time immemorial the region of heavy grasses. Travelers tell us of a limitless range of herbage towering aloft and swaying hither and thither with the breeze, of a profusion of flowers intoxicating with their perfume which is wafted for miles. But the heat of summer reduces this ocean of vegetation to an arid and tangled mass. The discharge of the hunter's gun sends a spark among the desiccated verdure and in a moment the flames arise; with the rapidity of the whirlwind they widen in their comprehension and sweep forward, irresistible as death, swift as the chariot wheels of time. The affrighted wayfarer cowers beneath their approach. Escape from a fiery furnace seems impossible unless he can remove the vehicle of the devouring element, and casting a lighted match at his feet he walks in safety over the parched, heated ground while the conflagration roars harmlessly in the distance before him. Where there is no conductor of words spoken the fury of passion dies away for lack of material to foster it. Where there is no man or woman to bear the fire-brand from heart to heart and from house to house, the flames of excitement and the fervor of sensational eagerness cease and leave the dust and ashes of thoughtful memory and of penitence. It may not be always practicable or expedient to avoid repeating what we hear to the discredit of another, but we shall largely neutralize the peril of such quotations if we connect with it the practice of saying simply and without exaggeration what we know in

favor of the person in question, or if we are ready with a judicious vindication when we hear him attacked.

Circumstances may and do arise in which it is deemed right and necessary to take away a man's natural life or to suspend his association with his fellow beings, and similarly circumstances may and do arise in which it is not only necessary but right to say things adverse to our neighbor's fair fame and thus to estop his civil life. It is a positive charity to expose impostors who deceive mankind. We can and ought to show the inconsistency of a man's life with his professions and thus prevent a wolf in sheep's clothing from devouring the flock, and this holds good whether the person against whom society is cautioned be vicious in practice or erroneous in principle. Error in fundamental points of religion is exceedingly perilous to young and unwary souls, and it is a maudlin, spurious charity, too, which salves over such errors with unctuous flattery of the lives of those who teach them. Not so did the apostle who is the great example of the primal grace of love in a mortal man.

Saint John did not think that pretty, philosophical sentiments and a life ethically correct were a proper composition for vital and crucial doctrinal deflections.

"Whosoever transgresseth," he cries, "and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching of Christ hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house and give him no greeting." Love is kind, but love pre-eminently rejoiceth in the truth. And in order finally and irrevocably to connect with the one pure and spotless career of Him who has passed into the heavens this all-important topic, we have the song of the psalmist, and it contains both challenge and encouragement, both prophecy and promise:

"Lord, who shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle,
Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?"

He that slandereth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his friend, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor; and if we need a prayer for our constant use we have it in those words which have been the ejaculations of the saints in all ages: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth. Keep the door of my lips." "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts."

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

Having the desire to depart and to be with Christ.— Phil. 1 : 23.

DEATH can be only the matter of a moment, a scarcely appreciable point of time. It does not take long to die, yet it casts its long shadow over a whole threescore and ten years. We have as little to do with the minute and the manner of our death as we have to do with the circumstances and the date of our birth. Yet death is not for many consecutive hours absent from our thoughts. No one ignores this event in his mind for any measurable period, while each thoughtful man frames his own attitude of opinion or of judgment toward the closing scenes of his life. Some, like the Stoic who in the Roman monuments holds his wife by the hand and bids her farewell without tears and without hope, accept death as a dark mystery which we cannot pierce and about which it is vain to speculate. Some dread it as an unavoidable catastrophe which, so far as may be, should be put out of sight and speech, which can be mentioned only at peril of a shudder, which men find it advantageous to hide with the drapery of sin.

What the average Christian thinks about death one can only guess from his tone when he refers to the end of his earthly career, or from his habits as he mourns his departed friends. One fears that the idea of death held by the average believer is as much pagan as Christian, and certainly it seldom rises to the height of faith displayed by Saint Paul, who counts it, along with life, as among the Christian's possessions, as manifested by those triumphant

followers of the Lord who wore white as they buried another martyr. According to the classical idea of Saint Paul, death was, first of all, another name for rest. For many a long year the apostle had tabernacled in a body of humiliation, which was tortured by disease — a thorn in the flesh, and wounded by persecutions — the marks of the Lord Jesus. He was wearied with endless and toilsome journeys by land and sea through cold and heat, persecuted, shipwrecked, imperiled, desolate, ever homeless and sometimes houseless. With exhaustive and unsparing labor he wrought for his living as a tent-maker, and had on his heart and brain the care of all the churches. His sensitive soul was sorely tried by the opposition of enemies, by the treachery of friends, by the ingratitude of converts.

No business man of to-day, no careworn housewife and mother of the nineteenth century, ever faced as many or as momentous problems as confronted Paul the apostle. From the beginning of his career onward, as a Pharisee and a Christian, Saint Paul is the type of hard and high living. Into his apostolate he surely packed the maximum of thought, and feeling, and work, and suffering. It was natural that he should feel tired and look kindly toward his release. As a reaper pauses in the heat of the day and imagines his return homeward in the cool of the evening, his heart leaps and he is glad. Men who have struggled hard and who carry scars do not cling fiercely to life. They are prepared to die as one is prepared to sleep. Sleep was one of the apostolic names for death, full of tenderness and peace, but it must not be understood to mean inaction. It is rest from the weariness and harassment of the present life. It is the entrance into the freedom and buoyancy of the life to come. They who are laid at rest in death have but gone to bed earlier than others and we are preparing to follow them. Life is a period during which the frailties and faults of our imperfect nature

are gradually slipped that we may enter unburdened into the unseen world. As the wrinkles are smoothed from the face of a sufferer by the gentle hand of death, and as the war-worn veteran returns to his youth in his reminiscences, so the weariness departs from the soul and enters into the rest for which amid this struggle we often hunger and thirst.

Saint Paul as a typical Christian regarded his death also as a sacrifice. The Jewish worshiper poured forth his drink-offering to God, and the apostle hoped some day to take his life in his hand and make a libation of it at the footstool of his Father. His career had been one long oblation. He had given up his home, his friends, his country, his reputation, his Jewish orthodoxy. One thing only remained —his cup of life. This he held also in trust for God, and at the appointed moment he would surrender it with joy. His special desire was for the martyr's crown, the ambition of all the saints. And it was not denied him. He who for many a year had tasted suffering at last drank his fill of the cup of his Master's consecration.

It would be wrong, however, to conclude that only he who falls by fire or sword offers up his all to God. The true essence of sacrifice is not in the circumstantials of measure or duration, but in the direction and intensity of the will. Life is made up of innumerable acts, and each has its own moral complexion. If the motive which inspires us is self-will, then the color of life is base and squalid. If devotion to the will of God be the spring of action, then is life noble and elevated. And the last and most solemn act of all our lives is to die. If, as the inevitable call of God approaches, we repine and rebel, then death will be an act of violence, full of indignity and degradation. If we give welcome to the summons and go out to meet it, then is death the supreme act of homage and obedience. It is the climax of communion between the soul and God.

Unto Saint Paul death appeared as gain, and therein he is comparing it with life. Life is a time of choice, of education, of imperfection, of probation, and, allow as we please for the good will and the grace of God, there is an element of uncertainty about it. No vessel sailing a treacherous sea is safe till it has reached port and cast anchor. One is delighted by the unexpected recoveries and rehabilitations of character in his neighbors. One is cast down by the amazing catastrophes of character. If it be the case, as some believe, that no man is hopeless, one is also driven to the conclusion that no man is secure. Some latent weakness may be developed, some unexpected temptation may be too strong. It becomes one to be humble and diffident. The unknown possibilities in human nature are among the elements of chastening and warning which only frivolous and foolhardy people can ignore. No one ever had a more absolute faith in God, none ever followed Christ more closely than Saint Paul, and yet he was haunted by the thought that in the end he might be a castaway. It would have been altogether a horrible thing if one who had besought men to believe in Christ and to suffer for Christ, should himself deny the Lord and put Him to an open shame; if one who had testified at all times to the excellent glory of the world to come, should himself go into darkness.

It was, on the other hand, altogether fitting and joyous that Saint Paul should reach at last the goal which he saw afar off, and receive the crown from his Lord's hands. While he lived this could not be. Death was the moment of final victory. For him, therefore, and for every man who really battles with sin all his life long, death is great gain. And death was, above all to such as Saint Paul, a meeting with Jesus Christ, the object of his ceaseless faith, the hope of his longing heart. This man did not speculate about heaven — where it was and what it was. He did not

receive visions of its detailed and panoramic glory, as became a mystic like Saint John. For him heaven was not a place, but a state. It was another name for Christ, the sum of all goodness, the revelation of all perfection. Between him and the Master who commissioned him there had been a long friendship with many blessed communications, which had grown more intimate every year and still had never been completed. Saint Paul had heard the Christ's voice on the road to Damascus. He had seen Him in visions. For brief moments he had visited the third heavens. But face to face and as He was in the flesh the great apostle had not set eyes on his Master, as did Saint Peter and Saint John. For a Lord unseen, or for a Lord whom he only saw occasionally and in unearthly guise, this man lived and labored and suffered as few have ever done.

What wonder that Saint Paul hungered and thirsted for the day when that dark servitor Death would usher him into the unveiled presence of the Christ, whom hitherto he had seen in a glass darkly!

> That one face, far from vanishing, rather grows
> Or decomposes, but to recompose,
> Becomes my universe that feels and knows.

For this representative Christian to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord. The mystical passion may not rise to this height in us ordinary people but the cloud of death has even for us its silver lining. There are hours when we would go far to see in His glory Him who has loosed the burden of our sins. With Him are our departed, waiting for our coming, so that to die is to meet again those gone before. If death veils from our eyes this world in which we have lived, and which to most of us has been a pleasant world, the same hand which opened to us this sphere of things will disclose to us the

realm of the future wherein is contained the reality of those scenes whereof we have thus far only dreamed.

And if death separates us from those with whom we have lived in peace and joy, we shall be instantly joined to those who have gone before, and who, as the years pass, become the majority. So heaven grows into the great home of our kindred, whereof the vestibule is to our earthly vision dark and forbidding.

And again there is no person of barely human sympathy who does not wish to believe that those whom we love and have lost awhile are conscious of their friends and spectators of our trials. It were a peculiar grief to conclude either that we had been blotted out from their memory or that they had no knowledge of our life. When they leave us and the dark-sailed ship that bears them disappears in the glowing west, we recognize and bow before the inevitable order of things. We are also fully aware that they will not return after a space, and, as reasonable people, we do not linger on the wharf in vain regret, but at once set ourselves to duty with a steadfast heart. It might seem to those not yet initiated into this mystery of sorrow that we had lost little or could forget at will. Those who try to comfort the sorrowing in this flimsy fashion do not remember how much the voyagers to the distant shore have taken with them, nor what a void they have left. Gone from our sight and eliminated from our affairs in bodily touch, they are enshrined in our memory and more than ever are lords of our love.

It were an immense consolation to know that they have us in their hearts, and that although they have passed into the other world, yet from their vantage ground they follow us as we pursue our measured way, and that if we could see them, faces look upon us out of the shadows and spiritual forms touch and inspire our thoughts and mould our policy. If we are wrought upon by reason — and God

has surely not given us this noble faculty only to deceive us — we may well cherish the confidence that the departed remember us. It were incredible that the scissors of death which evidently separates a man from his physical environment should likewise sever the golden cord of memory and isolate him forever from his dearest interests. If the past were blotted out the personality would be annihilated. The man, the woman, could no longer say "I" after such a detachment. He or she would begin life again as some one else. A vast chasm would separate the probationary and the triumphant stage of existence. Is it not more reasonable as well as more just that the noble souls who lived and suffered and died in the cause of God — patriarchs, prophets, martyrs — should see from God's paradise the day of Christ coming upon the earth and the victory of righteousness gradually achieving ?

Is it not also fitting that a mother who has planned great things for her son and died before they were fulfilled should behold the answer to her prayers and be satisfied ? This is as it should be in a reasonable universe, and this we conclude it to be unless God intends to put us to confusion and to void the analogy of His own dealings in other respects. This conclusion of reason is confirmed by at least one passage in Holy scripture, and that recording an incident in the life of our Lord. As we all must have noticed, the Christ while in this world ever suggested another world of which He was a native. He was in constant touch with the unseen. He was consistently under its influence. He responded to its impressions. Angels ministered to Him. The heavens opened above His head. Voices were heard calling Him the beloved Son of God. As we read the New Testament we are convinced that if ever the veil between the worlds should be lifted it would be through Him, the chief exponent of religion, the one sent of God, the visible link between the worlds, temporal and eternal.

What was to be expected happened in the transfiguration, when the Lord manifested for a brief space His glorified humanity, as now He bears it in the presence chamber above, and when two of the citizens of the unseen sphere joined Him beneath the shadow of the bright cloud. Two living personages, they stood with Jesus, and their conversation had to do not with heaven, but with earth; not with the present only, but with the past as well. Moses, the law-giver, the apostle of Israel's exodus from Egypt; Elijah, the prophet, who pointed to the degenerate ten tribes the path out of idolatry, spake with Him of His exodus which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. The passage of God's host through the Red Sea away from bondage was the type of another departure of soul from body whereby we are delivered from slavery to sin. The challenge of the Tishbite to the prophets of Baal prefigured the voice of another great teacher, who from the cross should arouse and attract the nations to worship the crucified. The exodus from Pisgah's height of Moses, whose grave no man knoweth, prophesied the departure of Him whose dying eyes descried not the earthly Canaan with its beauty of landscape subdued by Israel, but all worlds subjected to Himself in His resurrection and ascension. "I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me."

The assumption of the man of Gilead in the chariot of fire presaged that temporary withdrawal of the Son of Man, that He might fill all things with the spirit of His grace. As in their day the chosen leader of the covenant people and the commissioned spokesman of the Most High had thought and toiled only for God's kingdom and its consummation in the coming One, and had departed before the day of its glory, so all the pre-Christian ages those patient saints had watched the growth of the Messianic anticipations and movements and had longed for their fulfillment and realization in great David's greater Son.

They spake with the Christ of the exodus which He should accomplish at Jerusalem as typified by the exodus of the Red Sea, and of Nebo, and of the Jordan. If the two Jewish leaders were still intent upon their life work, and recalled its salient features, and made them the connecting link between the two dispensations, it may be taken for granted that in their measure others will still pursue the high ends of their earthly sojourn, and that one who has had friendships or godly purposes here will hardly forget them hereafter.

No doubt this belief collides rudely with a certain idea of conventional piety, that a person admitted to paradise will be so absorbed in the contemplation of God, or the celebration of His praise, or the enjoyment of his own high estate, that he will be removed far above former ties and earthly considerations. This sounds plausible and seems beautiful, but if you look into it, it is not Christian or religious. Suppose the head of a household, fighting the hard battle of poverty and enduring many trials, should migrate to a new country and there attain great wealth: would not his thought, so far as he is a true-hearted man, be of the patient wife and clinging children whom he had left, and if through any hindrance he could not at once share with them his happiness, would he not pursue them with his thoughts and his prayers? What piety is that which rests on disloyalty to one's kindred? Is not love the surest evidence of communion with God? Various heavens have been imagined which do not attract or elevate, but one of sheer selfishness is surely the worst. The conviction that the departed are not dead, nor unconscious, nor indifferent to us, their poor relations, but are full of activity and constantly mindful of their earth-bound friends, is full of excellent effects. For one thing it invests the unseen world with reality, so that we are not repelled by the thought of an unknown, inhospitable foreign shore. Grad-

ually, as we look across, the shadows take form and we recognize those whom we remember and would wish to see again. They are living there as they did in our homes. They are thinking of us. They are ready to give us welcome. They will mayhap have much to tell us.

The belief of this alone can save us from vain regrets. The man who has lost a friend is hardly satisfied with himself when he looks back upon their relations to each other. Wherein the departed failed you, it is forgotten. Wherein you failed them, it is bitterly remembered. You cannot now ask pardon of them, but surely they see the tears which have at last burst the barriers of pride. They know the reparation one is making for their sake. To them is not denied the satisfaction of knowing that those whom they love are inspired to follow their example. If there be joy in the presence of God's angels over the penitent, there must be a share for the mother whose prayers have at last been answered in the return of the sinner from the error of his ways.

And in the witness of the departed is one of the strong encouragements of life. If there be none left on earth to bid us good cheer and sustain our hearts, there be many on the other side, and as we run our ordered course the departed stretch out their hands, rejoicing as we slip each weight and forsake each sin, and yearning till we also reach the goal and receive the crown.

THE PLEA OF BARTIMAEUS.

But he cried out the more a great deal — Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. — S. Mark 10: 48.

THERE are three powers which, interacting upon one another, work out the great drama of human life. There is the power within us, the power of self. There is the power without us, the power of the world. In proportion as we can make the power within operative on the power without we are successful. But above these two powers there is a third — the power of God, over all and above all powers. If the power of self, working in conjunction with the power of the world, brings about success, as men term it, the realization of the power of God leads the way to that higher conquest of both the world and self — the victory of character. The story of Bartimaeus shows us a man in difficulties, and exhibits his conduct when face to face with these three great powers of life — the power of the world, the power of self, and the power of God. He is a man who has to meet his own weakness, for he is blind. Weak though he is he has to confront the world, for he has to beg. Finally, one critical day he has to stand in the presence of divine power. We shall see what the world did for him, what he did for himself, and what God's love did for him. And in noticing these things we shall see a picture of life as it is in most men.

The world has its powers and its limitations. There is something which the world can do, and that something the world on the whole very readily does. The world can give its compassion to the needy, and the world is not slow to give it. The blind man sat by the gate, and the crowd that swept in and out of the city was not, we may believe, composed of hard-hearted folk, indifferent to the sufferings of their fellow creatures. On the contrary many compassionate glances were probably cast at the unfortunate man, whose sightless eyes and outstretched hands appealed to their pity. This is the case in all the centuries. But the world did something more. It gave its alms. The blind man, deprived of the means of supporting himself, did not find that the world resented his inability as an affront to itself. Nay, probably many a passer-by dropped coins into the beggar's open palm. The world's powers went as far as the bestowal of compassion and money, but it had its limitations. The one thing which the man most needed was the one thing which the world could not give. His real need was sight. The world could give pity when Bartimaeus wanted power. It could give alms when Bartimaeus wanted eyes. The world can seldom reach the real needs of men. There are few things more grotesque or pathetic than the incongruity of the world's gifts in relation to human necessity. The gifts are beautiful and abundant, but then they are not what are wanted. The world gives the sumptuous marble after men are dead to mark their last resting-place, and they grave deep upon the polished shaft the story of man's achievements, but the world does not always give them sympathy while they are alive, or tender the homage to their teaching which can satisfy the soul.

What society gave to Bartimaeus, kind and well-intentioned as they were, were just the things which reminded him most keenly of his misfortune. In receiving the alms

of men he felt his dependence. And to true manhood, alive with energy and robust in strength the sense of helplessness is humiliating and hard to bear. But this is typical of the world's limitations of power. It can give toys and ribbons. It can soothe, and console, and materially support. It cannot restore capacities. It cannot comfort. It cannot satisfy the tenfold wants of man's nature. It offers gold to the sick man, whose real need is health. It tenders money to the suffering, whose true want is sympathy. It attempts to provide ease and wealth for the soul that is thirsting for truth. It would make a man less a man by emphasizing his dependence, because it cannot give him inspiration and set him on his feet.

People in all the ages have found out the world and its limitations. Like Severus, who had reached the supreme height of power, they have tried everything and found that everything was naught. Like Augustine, they have ascertained that the heart which was made for greater things cannot rest in the lesser. Like Lacordaire, they have exclaimed with indignation and loathing, "I cannot leave my soul in this heap of mud." The world, great, kindly, generous as it is, cannot satisfy the spiritual desire of one single unit in its many-millioned population; nay, there are many bodily defects and maladies which it cannot supply or heal. Alms and pity could not restore to Bartimaeus the use and capacity of his manhood's powers.

The world too, has its moods. The society in which we live is kindly and well-disposed. It is not at least hard-hearted or callous. But it likes to help in its own way. It is relentless in its opposition to those who strike out on their own line to secure assistance. It gave Bartimaeus alms, but when he cried aloud, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy," it thought him ungrateful to it and troublesome to the Prophet, and it told him to be quiet. It hindered the man in his attempt to realize

his most cherished dreams. The one thing he wished was restored capacity, the power to guide and direct his energies and his life. The moment came when this was within his grasp. The Healer, the Prophet of Nazareth, endowed with the powers of restoration, was near. Bartimaeus lifted up his voice in earnest appeal. But the moment he asserts himself and ceases to be meekly acquiescent in the world's patronage the world turns against him. Society, which a while ago gave him its compassion and its alms, treats him as an intruder and a disturber of its prescribed order. "They rebuked him that he should hold his peace."

The world is intolerant of the best aspirations of men. It resents the policy of those who strike out for themselves. It has a way of stifling the voices which are lifted up in earnest desire or noble appeal. Genius has found it so. The poet like the prophet, finds little honor among his own folk. The trim and conventional faces of those about him look with anger or reproach upon the incipient genius who dares to dream of a career different from the counter or the office desk. Shakespeare's name was mentioned in unpleasant association with certain deer stealing traditions of the Arden forest. John Milton was characterized as a writer of dull verse. Many an artist has been damned with faint praise by his contemporaries. Let us not be too rigorous in our judgments of such critics. It is not everyone whom society discourages who has the genuine gift of the pen, or the brush, or the chisel. A man is not necessarily a genius because his friends think him erratic or self-willed. He may be all this and something worse. But still the aspirations of lasting power have not always met with a warm reception in the world. His own generation has too often clamored down the man whose intellectual or artistic power was above the average of his time. Philanthropy has found the same state of things. The efforts

of noble-hearted men to help the oppressed and forlorn have been met with suspicion and assailed with calumny. Howard, Wilberforce, Charles Sumner — none of them escaped detraction. Society has shouted against those who have cried aloud in the cause of humanity, and has bidden them to hold their peace.

The reformer has fared no better. Gideon the champion of Israel was suspected. Eliab rebuked the patriotic utterances of young David. Apostles, proclaiming a nobler life and spiritual emancipation to society, were impugned as those who were turning the world upside down. The world is kind enough in its own conventional way, but it does not realize its own limitations. It thinks it can do everything. Hence it resents the dissatisfaction of those who seek something outside of it — something which it cannot give. It suspects what it cannot understand. It hates because it fears what it suspects. It becomes through fear brutal and careless of the higher interests, and blind to the nobler instincts of humanity. Against the voices that cry for freedom, for enlarged capacity, and for the higher vision of manhood the world presents its dull and unsympathetic opposition. And it does so not from hardness or unkindness, but from ignorance and fear; from the dullness that has little affinity with the noble discontent which desires to advance the welfare and ameliorate the condition of mankind along spiritual lines.

The world likes to patronize those who are content with its patronage, but when Bartimaeus desired no longer to be a profitless and dependent creature, when he wanted to be a man and not a mendicant, when he craved the restoration of his eye-sight, and with it that capacity for self-direction which is requisite to genuine life, when he exhibited independence of judgment and of conduct, the world bade him keep still and be quiet. Nay, what right had he to want to look again upon the streets and environs

of Jericho. Presumptuous, impudent beggar! Did he not get his hands full of money every day, and did not the people give it to him? Ungrateful creature! Let him sit in the gateway and cultivate thankfulness for what he received. "They rebuked him that he should hold his peace."

And this leads us to consider what Bartimaeus did for himself. There are two principles which are essential to independent success. One of them we call self-dependence, the other we term single-mindedness. This blind man illustrated both. He was self-reliant. He took his own course. He did not easily abandon his purpose because of the clamor of the crowd. They bade him to cease crying, but he, realizing how little he could depend on their good offices for what he craved, called so much the more, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

This is a lesson which life soon teaches us. In our days of inexperience we are tempted to count much on the help of others. Men begin life by hoping much from their patrons. They know men who have influence, and they think they can lean upon them and gain with this leverage wealth or position. But they soon unlearn the delusion. They are thrown back upon their own resources. They must struggle unassisted. They must too often wait for proffers of help until they have reached a point where they do not need it. They discover that self-reliance is their best patron. They come to expect little and to ask for nothing. They find it as unsafe to depend upon the multitude when they cry Hosanna, as to be daunted by them when they bid them hold their peace. Bartimaeus is self-reliant. He takes no account of the remonstrance of the crowd. But his is not the heedlessness of a coarse and indifferent nature. It is the persistence of a man who knows what he wants, and who has the courage to dare all to secure it. There is an ignoble recklessness, which betrays

a blunted and an unsympathetic nature. There is a noble disregard of criticism which is born of earnestness and confidence in the right. The man who has it is neither cowed by fear nor enervated by self-consciousness. It is the quality which many a military man of this land and of other lands has displayed when he takes a certain position, adopts a certain policy, and holds to his choice in spite of newspaper clamor, political abuse, and ignorant accusations. The result proves that he knows what he is doing, and hence his accusers or critics will be written down impudent chatterers or driveling theorists. Earnestness does not depart from its path because it is misunderstood. Saint Paul will not cease to preach because Festus says that much learning has made him mad. Our Lord did not suspend His work because His friends said that He was beside Himself. The fire of enthusiasm is not quenched by the dampness of unappreciative criticism. Clamor cannot silence the voice of him who knows what he seeks. The object in view is worth the cost of some inconvenience and sacrifice.

The answer to cavilers given by such a man as Bartimaeus is the redoubling of his efforts. The more opposition, the greater struggle. The more clamor, the stronger determination. The more they rebuked him, the more he cried out, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." But in order to success, single-mindedness must be the companion of self-reliance. Self-reliance may easily degenerate into self-conceit. Self-conceit is too often content with imaginary victories, and scorns the cross which single-mindedness bears with the crown in view. Single-mindedness knows that some sacrifice is needed, and it is ready to pay the price. It is content to fling out of the way everything that stands in its path. It will cast overboard the most precious freightage in order to reach the harbor. The long robe about Bartimaeus was useful enough as he sat

by the gate of the city the whole day through, but when he wanted to run it hindered him. There is no hesitation in his action. He casts away his garment, and flies in the direction of the Christ. His policy is the very opposite of that of the rich young ruler, whose story is told in the same chapter. The blind man put away all his entanglements. The man of money clutched his wealth tighter when he was told to give it to the poor and to follow the Christ, and he went away sorrowful without the blessing of discipleship. Greatness has the courage which can sacrifice what is useful when its usefulness is gone, and when it has become an encumbrance and a snare, Boats are good in moving an army across rivers, but Cæsar knows when to burn them. Social pleasure is a recreation, but industry ruthlessly puts it away to win a goal. The great English jurist said that the path to eminence is to live like a hermit and to work like a horse. That which is the counsel of successful lives is the command of religion. For the sake of the higher life the shackles of the lower must be laid aside. The garments of the old self must be left behind.

This is the thought of an apostle: "This one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, I press forward." In the same strain wrote one who sought to console his countrymen when they saw the old and loved regimen crumbling around them, and strove to point them forward to the Christ, who is ascended into the heavens: "Wherefore, laying aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, let us run with patience the race that is set before us." When the soul is filled with one strong passion, such single-mindedness becomes easy. What was raiment to Bartimaeus when he could receive the priceless dowry of his sight? What sacrifice seems too great to those who are athirst for the vision of God?

But we touch another side of the story when we see what the Christ did for Bartimaeus. The man in the

presence of the world is one scene in this dramatic incident, and in it we see how needful and forceful are the powers of self-reliance and self-denial. But man and the world are not the only factors in life. Above and beyond them there is the great power of the love which encompasses all. Self-assertion may work well against society, and a man will gain little here in certain circles who does not have a good share of it. But in the presence of Him who is greater than society the spirit of self-assertion drops away. Bartimaeus stands before the Christ and his whole demeanor is changed. He is no longer the stout and strong pleader of his own cause. He no longer cries, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy." He is silent now that the Master has commanded him to be brought. He stands as one who waits. Quiet expectance is now the proper attitude. He has done all that it is right for him to do. He has done all that he can do. The hand of love must do the rest for him, as he turns upward his sightless eyes.

There are gifts that come only to quiescent, susceptible souls. Those who believe that by energy and effort they can appropriate to themselves all that they need miss the deeper side of life. There are communications which come only to those who get away from the brief and shallow clamor of the competing world. For such there are voices in the stillness, after the earthquake and the fire. Great men of different faiths and different ages have realized this. Noted philosophers have found their subtlest syllogisms coming to them after meditation and worship. Haydn prayed before he composed his oratorios. Many a man of genius can truly say of his best works, "They were given to me." The receptive attitude of mind is helpful to all creative undertakings in the intellectual world, but it is absolutely essential to the religious life. In this realm there are blessings which no energy can grasp and no talent or industry can secure. "He hath filled the hungry with

good things and the rich he hath sent empty away," is one of the grandest strophes of the Magnificent. The best gifts are vouchsafed of God to the lowly and expectant spirit. Inspiration is for those who can wait and watch. It has been said that one of the most suggestive pictures in the Albert Memorial Chapel at Windsor represents the aspect of the soul waiting for God's gift. David and the harpists of Israel are shown with their instruments in their hands. Their fingers hang listless upon the strings. Their heads are bowed. All the appliances of their art are in their grasp, but the divine afflatus is not yet. They are expecting the inspiration from on high.

So Bartimaeus, the man of energy and self-assertion, waits before the Christ for the impartation which his force and his determination cannot seize, which must come to him as the gratuity of charity. The man of secular independence is to learn heavenly humility. He must abide until the Master asks: "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" The boon must be given by love and received by faith. And thus he who was so self-reliant toward the world learns the sweetness and the calm restfulness of reliance upon one mightier and more tender than himself.

Notice the decision of our blessed Lord's love. The love of some people is sensitive in quality, but it may lack firmness. Many souls full of the exquisite sensibility of affection have very little persistence in their love. They are quickly aroused to emotion, but they are also quickly hushed into inactivity. There is a benevolence which cannot stand before clamor, which dreads unpopularity, and which dies before opposition. Christ's tenderness was as stalwart and staunch as it was prompt and judicious. No noise of discountenancing crowds could stay the march of His sympathy. In the midst of the outcry against Bartimaeus He stood and commanded him to be brought.

Then occurs in the narrative one of those life-touches which are so characteristic of the New Testament. In one moment after the bidding of the Prophet goes forth the caviling multitude changes its policy. As long as Bartimaeus was only an importunate and friendless petitioner it regarded him as an impertinence and was eager to cast him down. But when the Healer, the center of that day's interest, turns upon him his attention and invites him forward, it alter its tone. Now it is full of congratulatory and almost offensive patronage. "Poor fellow! We always pitied and helped him, and he was always so nice and grateful, too." They patted him on the back and whispered, "Come now, we will lead you along and show you the way. Don't be afraid. Be of good cheer. Rise; He calleth thee."

Nothing succeeds with the world like success. The voice of the crowd is often only the echo of the strongest voice in it. A little firmness and the decided, earnest man soon brings the mob to his view of the right. The man who knows what he means and has the persistence requisite to pursue it regardless of noise is like a solid mass floating on the surface of the water, which draws the purposeless jetsam to its side. The decisiveness of Christ's benevolence exercised a protection over Bartimaeus. His love was of that courageous order which shelters as well as benefits its object.

But why should this blind man go through the form of asking, "Lord, that I might receive my sight?" Why should we? God knows our wants, we cannot teach Him. God is all powerful. He can help us. He is all-good. He will. What need then of prayer? But this asking is not all of prayer; nay, nor half of it. We know what our children want frequently, but we wait for them to tell us. We love to hear earnest voices lifted up in hesitating request. We take pleasure in the expression of their

trust. A greater thing than to ask or to gain a boon is to realize the bond of love and confidence between father and child, between God and man. The meeting of trusting need and of kindly power develops mutual understanding. The heart-ties grow strong. As we pray, the relation between the believer and his God proves to be not that of material dependence, but of personal, spiritual sympathy. And the Christ sought, by the exercise of a judicious and deliberate love, so to bind Bartimaeus to Himself. He would have him pray, as He would have us pray, in order that there may be not only Healer and healed, but disciple and Master, sinner and Saviour, Redeemer and redeemed.

Love has limitations of power in our case. It cannot do all that it desires to do. With Christ, love and power are one. "Receive thy sight," is His command. Bartimaeus looks up and his rejoicing goes, first resting upon Him who had shielded, called, restored him. He beholds the Prophet who had given him what the world, with all its boasted patronage, could never have bestowed. He sees things as they are in nature and in grace. He needs no longer any to lead him by the hand. He is restored to true and complete manhood. He uses it well. He follows Jesus in the way. The Christ can give the same to us all. He is the light of the world. That light makes us see all the great forces of life — the world, self, God; the force without us, the Christ; the force within us, prayer; the power above us, our Father, reconciling us to Himself.

THANKFULNESS

And it came to pass that as they went they were cleansed. And one of them when he saw that he was healed turned back and with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks; and he was a Samaritan. — S. Luke 17: 14–16.

THERE is a fault which we all of us easily recognize and heartily condemn. Other sins there are which we are half inclined to pass over, for we know too intimately their fascination; but ingratitude for kindness, for love — this never fails to shock us. We refuse it all apologies, defenses, palliations. We pronounce against it a sentence, unfaltering, summary, sharp. And this story of Saint Luke, therefore, commends itself at once to all of us for its naturalness, its faithfulness to life, its counterpart and correspondent in our own experience and observation. Our only difficulty lies in believing it possible that nine out of the ten men should have been so graceless. We may notice that we are always startled by ingratitude. It seems to us a thing incredible, a matter which our ordinary humanity repudiates with indignation, and yet it is very odd that we should in the face of experience retain our surprise. For surely we know that there is no feeling so rare, so uncertain, so brief, as gratitude. In politics it is a proverb that no one, however patriotic, self-sacrificing, disinterested, can ever count on a nation's gratitude. It is the universal plaint of the charitable and the philanthropic

that gratitude among those whom they have striven to help by every species of self-denial is a very small consideration, and vanishes speedily under the slightest pressure.

And yet, kind people engaged in good works and having a claim to some experience of men and things, still creep up to us and pour into our ears their sad tale of disappointment, as if the current of events could change for their benefit, as if all the traditions and antecedents of the past were to be reversed, as if man was to be made over again to flatter their self-complacency. They talk as though they above all their predecessors were especially aggrieved, as if they had a right to expect and demand for their reward a generous and responsive appreciation, as if they were staggered by some abnormal display of human wickedness.

And yet, why should there be all this melancholy and indignant astonishment at the unthankfulness of others? Surely the lives of all God's saints and God's workers suffice to remind us that the world has never been grateful even for the benefits and the comforts or the healings and the releases which it had no right to expect. How much more fully can it be proven that constant gifts become assumed rights, and that it is very difficult to sustain a heart with thankfulness for mercies which we take for granted just because they are renewed every morning? Have we ever, then, taken the trouble to examine the quantity and the quality of our habitual thankfulness to God for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life? Never, save from under the discipline of some bed of sickness or some rescue from death, do we attempt to sound the abyss of our ingratitude for all that has been done, continuously and without note on our part, for our comfort and joy, by the Father in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

And yet the measure of the one is the measure of the other. The man who makes no acknowledgment for the

food that nourishes him, the clothing that protects him, the home that blesses him, returns no thanks when he is restored to health, or when the shadow of awful peril is lifted away, and the sun of prosperity again shines. He might be the subject of almost a miracle, and still he would be found among the nine that went their way, rather than with the one who returned to fall down on his face and give glory to God. And yet there is strange room for ingratitude even in the matter of the disappearance of disease. No man who has not experienced it can realize how readily the memory of sickness and all its inspirations of prayer and pondering can be wiped out of our hearts when once the tide of returning strength has swept into our veins. That pitiful weakness in which we lay moaning and crying, that dark anxiety which sucked us down into the maelstrom of fear, that miserable discomfort in which we wearily tossed from side to side, crying in the night, "Would God it were morning!" and in the morning, "Would God it were night!" All this, which seemed to lie upon us heavy and impenetrable as some black cloud, flies like the empty fabric of a vision and is gone in a moment.

And even pain that may have almost maddened us, pain that digs its claws into our very vitals, pain that rends and sears the very roots of our living, pain that will not be beguiled or alleviated by all the arts of the nurse or the physician — pain is wholly forgotten the moment it is withdrawn. Nothing, indeed, can vanish out of remembrance so rapidly as pain. It slips off like a cloak. It disappears like a stone thrown into a well. It is dispelled like an ugly nightmare. The period of its visitation becomes a blank. It is as though it had not been. We are willing to count it out of our lives. We shake ourselves. We pull ourselves together. We rise, and walk, and talk, and read. We are once more caught in the eager movement of affairs. We laugh, and hope, and scheme, and

look forward just as if no such suffering had ever been or could ever come again. We fit again into existence. We are once more in correspondence with all this breathing, teeming earth. We give and take freely. We use, we act, we move, we enjoy, and everywhere there is food for satisfaction. We come and go lightly and successfully, for motion and action have become so natural as to be again unnoticed efforts.

Health so beguiles us because it is natural; in other words, it is fixed, stated, constant. There is a strange sway exercised over our minds by that which is normal and according to rule. It satisfies and calms us by its very regularity. Its response to our expectations gives it some rational validity. Health is to be ours, we say, because it is customary. We have a right to expect it because it has always been accorded us by the laws of our being and in accord with the fitness of things. Its evenness, its sequence, its invariableness, smother all need of inquiry regarding its ultimate source. Without some marked or conscious neglect on our part, it always will be what it has been. It was the converse of this principle which bewildered us in sickness. It was not the normal state of things. It was not what we expected and apparently had a right to expect. It wrenched us out of our known and habitual environment. It threw us into uncertainty. We could not tell what the next minute would bring. We lost chart, and compass, and anchorage, standard, measure, and cue. We had no custom on which to rely. All our precedents and traditions were taken from us. And then in our distress and our impotence we learned how our very being hangs on the breath of the Most High, in whose hands it lies to kill and to make alive. Then we learned it — this awful spirituality, mystery, divinity of life. In that awful hour when all things seemed to be fading away upon which we seemed to have our strongest hold, we learned that God could control His

own impartation; that He could withdraw His own gift; that He was mightier than His own laws; that the tie between soul and body was in His grasp.

And as the man failed within, so nature failed without. Those deep foundations, those strong walls, those high ramparts of our living, seemed to be crumbling to dust. The earth, which in our health was so sturdy and so old, fades into a dream, a vapor, a fog, baseless and insecure. We have lost our grip upon everything, for everything eludes our touch. Our brain is unsteady, our feet totter, and we drift down to the skirts of the grave. God and ourselves are all then that the universe contains. But with health restored the normal solidity returns to the fabric of life. The all-familiar walls range themselves round about us. The all-familiar ways stretch out before us. We have something to cling to, something to walk upon, something to lean against. We can be sure of to-morrow. We can count and calculate, not because the usual is less wonderful than the occasional, or health less marvelous than sickness, but because our living seems now to have a foundation. We move in our old sphere unalarmed, unsurprised. We are surrounded again by things cogent, consistent, tangible, and God seems again to fade away. We dimly acknowledge that all this solid earth must finally be dependent on His sustaining will, yet in the mediate and complicated structure of the world God is so far off that only the remotest recesses of abstract reason apprehend His influence and His sovereignty.

Our recognition of God's agency in the restoration of health does not tell with any vivid emphasis on our will, our desires, or our practical living. The tide of spiritual conception recedes and leaves us apparently with an utterly sensuous environment, and we do not pray, nor commune with God in His house, nor at His table, nor in our own homes, as the pointing of His providence and the teaching

of His grace have impelled us to do. We are as those nine lepers who were healed "as they went," imperceptibly, unaccountably, fully. Lo! it has happened to them. Lo! it is done. The loathsome malady has disappeared. They are cleansed. Somehow the evil thing has dropped away from them and they find themselves as other men. They can go back to their homes, their friends, and their work. Doubtless it has all come from that good word of Him who bade them "Go show yourselves to the priests," and when they sought Him out they must have realized that He was their sole helper. Their eyes, their hearts, their deepest desires and yearnings must have bent themselves on Him, and they must have waited breathlessly to learn whether He had deliverance for them.

But now it is so different. It has happened "as they were going," as they were pondering, looking forward, perhaps despairingly, to the word of the official in the temple, as they were conning over the benediction of the prophet of Galilee. Before they begin to be conscious of any change in their state they feel that their plague is healed utterly, and that strange voice falls a little into the dim background. There are other matters which occupy their attention — the wonderful feeling of a new life, the sense of delicious surprise, the desire to see whether it is all true, and to experiment and to test it. And then their friends are about them, their friends from whom they have been parted for so many bitter years. They are welcomed back on every side into the brotherhood of men, into the warmth and glow of companionship, into the sweet ways of human kindliness, into the tender and pleasant places of home. So the happy earth closes up around them with friendly looks and with warm embraces. In and through it all they were no doubt very thankful to the Blessed Healer whose word had so blessed an outcome.

Mark, it is not said in the story that they did not feel

grateful to the Christ and to God. Grateful no doubt they were, with that vague, general, indefinite appreciation of a fact which binds a man to no duty, no self-denial, no consecration. Grateful doubtless are we, when we pass out of the shadows of sickness into the recovered life among our fellows, yet our gratitude too often goes no further than did theirs. They felt genial, pleasant, affable, in good humor with themselves and with every one else. Naturally enough, too. But they, like too many of our day, did nothing with their gratitude. It laid no burden of duty upon them. It imposed no responsibility. It was not an impulse, nor an inspiration, nor a mastering compulsion, which would suffer nothing to arrest its passionate will to get back to the feet of Him before which it had o nce s earnestly cried, "Jesu, Master — for Thou alone canst — do Thou have mercy on me!"

"When He smote them, they sought Him," wrote the psalmist, and it is proven true by some of us. We are eager — most of us — to find God when we are sick, when the normal round of life deserts us, and by its desertion frightens and bewilders us. But a pitiful minority can retain any hold on God in health, in work, in the daily current of the natural and the constant. And by this course we lay our faith liable to some very dangerous assaults. We all know them. There is the taunt of the young and the strong: "I feel the blood running free in my veins, and my heart leaps, and my brain is alive with hope. What have you Christians to tell *me* with your message for the sick and the dying? I have in me powers, capacities, and gifts. Before me lies an earth, God-given and God-blessed, and you bring me your religion of the maimed, the halt, the blind; a religion of the outcast and the disgraced; a religion of hospitals and jails: what is all this to me, active, independent, self-contained, self-sufficient?"

We may imagine one of the nine lepers saying exactly

this when he was urged by some faithful friend to return and give glory to God and to His prophet. We can conceive some of them pleading: "What is the use of thus recurring to the old sores and the old suffering when we are now free, joyous, hopeful. The Good Physician knows that we are healed, and that is enough for Him. Other calls, other recognitions, other voices wait upon us. No steps backward, no reminiscences of the weary, desolate, forlorn existence of the past. Let us go on and be thankful for a power that can keep as well as cleanse."

And we know as well the cavil of the nineteenth century worker: "I have will, patience, vigor, endurance. By this I can win myself bread, and clothing, and a home, and friends. Here is my task which God, which duty has set me, and it must be completed before the night falls. And you begin to talk to me of a religion that lightens failure, and ameliorates disease, and takes the sting out of death; of a spiritual insurance agency in which I should have a policy of protection, and security against possible or probable ills and hurts, with a city at the end of golden harps, and white robes, and jeweled pavements. Here on earth another sort of necessity is laid upon me. What have you to offer me, not of guarantee against future catastrophes, but here and now of force, and courage, and help?"

And this might very well have had its counterpart in the reasoning of the healed nine. "Why go back and tell the mysterious Cleanser how thankful I am? I have been away from my work, my family, my children, for these many years. They need me. They need bread. I have no time to lose. I must return to my old haunts and take up the thread of my responsibilities where terrible disability compelled me to lay it down. I know that this would be His counsel and advice, could I ask it."

And here, too, is the pleading of the scientist: "Why," he asks, "do you Christians go creeping about in the

dim corners of life, crying after God in all that is unusual, exceptional, unnatural, accidental? Why do you seek God only in terror, and infirmity, and corruption? Why do you find Him only in strange interventions, in magic healings, in abrupt breaches of custom? Order is more divine than disorder. Uniformity is more heavenly than arbitrary miracles. We scientific people search for God in nature, not in the unnatural; in the sure and the fixed, not in the accidental; in health, not in the failure of disease; in the high energies of splendid life, not in the pains of death."

So might argue the restored victim of leprosy: "God is going to be with me and in me, at my work and at my play, in my dear home and amid the consortings of my friends. The God that I worship is too large to be pleased with any sacrifice that I can offer to His messenger, with any oblation that I can make to His agent or representative for any matter like this of a cure. I shall meet Him and see Him in the rippling laughter of my children, in the sacramental charities of my table, in the parables of my hearthstone, in the joyous congratulations and genial sympathy of my companions."

And these demurrers are very real, very living, very pressing. They meet us implicitly or explicitly every day. How shall we face them? First let us be very sure that for no taunts from the young, the successful, the self-reliant; for no demands from either the workers or the wise, can we forget or forego the memory of Him who was sent to heal the broken-hearted, to comfort the weary and the heavy-laden, to give His blessing to the poor, the hungry, the unhappy; a good Physician to the sick, a good Shepherd to the lost, a Friend to the sinner, a Lover of children, a table Companion of the publican and the harlot. Nay, nor can we cease to walk as exiles and pilgrims here on earth, enjoying a heavenly citizenship and looking for a home eternal with God our Father. We dare not lose one scrap

of that high promise. We will hold it fast, for God knows how little we can afford to let slip this consolation in a world so tangled with wrong, so worn with disease, so smitten with sorrow, so soiled with sin. Nay, let us concede nothing to the sneer of the man of knowledge or the man of physical vitality.

But we have a message, none the less, for the happy, the healthful, the sage, the self-centered; for the young, the old, the rich, the poor, the learned, the unlearned. Surely their natural attitude toward God is that of thanksgiving, not of mere gratitude with the nine cleansed lepers, but of thanksgiving with the one Samaritan, who fell down at the Saviour's feet; thanksgiving with Lazarus at the gate, and Zachariah in the temple, and Moses in Pisgah's height. Thanksgiving—that is it which underlies the notes of praise to-day in Te deum and Benedictus, in hymn and anthem, in venite and psalter. Thanksgiving — that is it which faith employs and sanctifies not only in the poverty and the penitence of sinners, but in the gladness of work and the glory of wisdom. Nay, if we have faith we are thankful. If we see and grasp the unseen we shall make an oblation of our entire being and our entire substance here and now.

Thanksgiving is the root, the heart, the life of faith. Our faith begins and ends with thanksgiving, and all the scheme of redemption which faith apprehends, the message of the cross and the passion, the resurrection and the ascension, is summed up in the eucharist, the supreme act of sacrifice and of adoration which we render to-day. Thanksgiving has its foundations deep laid in that song of the first dawn, "when the morning stars sang together." Faith looks forward for its fruitage of triumphant honor to the hour when, lost in sight, there shall be upborne before the great white throne the voice of ten thousand times ten thousand of angels and archangels, singing forever the new

song of the Lamb that was slain. And, between the gladness of the first creation and the gladness of the final redemption, there still abides with us, unbroken by sin, unwearied by our disasters, unblackened by despair, undaunted by defeat, undismayed by persecution, that unceasing eucharist, instituted in the darkest day that the world can ever see, when, with foes about Him and treachery rife among His followers, our blessed Lord and Master in bitter loneliness of spirit, overshadowed by death, His soul troubled, His heart shuddering, held fast the red cord of praise and gladness, and "took bread, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and gave thanks."

Thanksgiving — this is our worship; and in the scope of its principle and its relations is embraced every state that life on earth can comprise, of poverty or wealth, of grief or gladness, of weakness or wisdom. Here is the religion for the young, the gay, the fair — the religion that begins and ends with thanksgiving which offers to God, which overflows to man. Let such in the name of Christ give thanks. Let such bring into their oblation to-day all their force, their hope, their vigor, their energy, for hope unoffered soon disappoints. Young life unpresented to God soon grows weary and stale. Happiness is only kept clean and untainted by the salt of sacrifice. Youth and hope need religion just as much as weakness needs consolation and sin needs grace. They need it to forestall defeat, to warn off spiritual weakness, to keep out despair. They need it that they may be caught in their beauty and their strength, and bound with the cords of God's love upon the altar of His loving-kindness, that they may be consecrated and laid up as treasures dear in His sight, where rust does not corrode, nor moth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. They need it that they may bring to God not embittered spirits, and cold hearts, and slackening pulses, not the penitent remains of a wrecked and stained life, but the

happy offering of a soul still white with the radiancy of expectation, and bodies still glad with the glory of living.

Thanksgiving is the religion for wealth, for it redeems it from that terrible self-complacency and self-satisfaction which chokes the channels of the spirit and will not let the rich man hear the voice of God, whose steward and almoner he is. It is the religion for work, because it lifts it out of its dullness, its harshness, its monotony, and warms it with the sunshine, and blesses it with the dignity, and hallows it with the joy of the carpenter of Nazareth. Thanksgiving is the religion for the present hour. For it you need not wait until the new heavens and the new earth come in. Now, as you are at your work or at your play, look around, above, beneath, and see the great measure of your gifts, the great opportunity of your privileges, the great comfort of your promises, the strong anchorage of your hope, and then you will lift up hallowed hands and give glory to Him who hath cleansed you, not from the leprosy which defiles the body, but from the sin that kills the soul and the selfishness which deadens the spirit.

Give thanks, therefore, young man, for strength of hand and brain. Give thanks, young woman, for face, and form, and tuneful voice. Give thanks not to yourself, but to God from whom they come, unto whom of right they belong. Give thanks, ye rich, for what have you that you did not receive ? Let your prayers and your alms come up for a memorial before God, and then you will learn by your very success to widen your sympathies and deepen your charity. Give thanks to-day at His table, ye sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and when ye go hence holy whispers will pass to and fro between your Father and you at every heart beat, at every pulsing breath, with every meal, with every association, until the hallelujahs of this earth be exchanged for the anthems of eternity.

THE LESSON OF ZACCHEUS*

Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.— S. Luke 19: 5.

THERE are persons to whom a religious life seems smooth and easy. They are gifted by God constitutionally with a freedom from those inclinations which in other men are tyrannous and irresistible. They are indued with those aspirations which other men seem to lack. It appears as if they were born saints. There are others to whom life is a perpetual trial. A whole world of passions keeps up strife within them. The name of the spirit which possesses them is legion. It is a hard fight from the cradle to the grave. It is up-hill work from the beginning to the end. It is toil all the way, and at the last it seems as if they had only kept their ground. There are circumstances which appear to be a very hotbed for the culture of religious principle. There are environments in which to popular view it is difficult to escape having a certain sort of religion.

There are other positions and relations in which correct living is, in ordinary human opinion, impossible. The soul tested by temptation is like iron tried by weights. No iron bar is absolutely infrangible. Its strength is tested by the pressure which it will bear without giving way. No soul is absolutely incapable of sinning. It seems as if all we can dare to ask even from the holiest is that they shall bear a certain amount of trial without casting off their allegiance to God. There are associations among which

*The last sermon ever preached by Mr. Meade. Delivered at Louisa Court House, Virginia, on October 22, 1899.

some people are forced to dwell daily in which the very idea of Christian rest and Christian security is negatived. There are occupations in which purity of heart can scarcely be conceived. There are temptations to which some are subjected, and in which to have stood upright would have required not a man's but an angel's strength.

Now, if life always presented the bright side of the picture in regard to our moral and spiritual relations, the need of Christian instruction and directions for conduct under various supposable cases would be superseded. The purpose of the institution of the church would be lacking if the light of God's countenance always shone, because the church exists for mutual sympathy and support. But life is for the most part a path of varied trial. How to lead the life divine, surrounded by temptations from within and from without; how to breathe freely the atmosphere of Heaven while the feet yet touch the earth; how to imitate closely the career of Christ, who shrunk from no scene of trying duty, and took the temptations of humanity as they came; or how even to be an ordinary saint, winning experience from fall, and permanent strength out of momentary weakness, and victory out of defeat — this is the problem.

Now the hindrances of Zaccheus were two-fold — partly circumstantial, arising from his riches and his profession as a publican, and partly personal, connected with his recollection of past guilt. The publican's position exposed him to temptation in the way of opportunity. A publican was a gatherer of the Roman public imposts. But his remuneration was not at all an ascertained salary drawn from the government. The citizen who was willing to take such invidious responsibility paid so much to the Roman authorities for the privilege of collecting the taxes from the province of Judea, and then appropriated the overplus of the revenues which he received. There was evidently a

temptation, then, to oppress the poor, to exact from the timid, and to overcharge everybody. All such extortion was the more easy and attractive because the only redress of the taxpayer was an appeal to law before a tribunal where his chance was small, with a Roman judge and an accuser who was an official of the Roman government. There was a strong leaning toward oppression, because the threat of litigation was nearly certain to exact a bribe.

The publicans came in contact with the poor only in the way of business. They had to do with their ignorance, their stupidity, their attempts to deceive, and hence the tenderest hearted among them became impatient and apparently unfeeling. Hard men, knowing that redress is difficult, become under these circumstances harder still, and exercise their authority with the insolence of office; and when to this is added the likelihood of impunity, and the pecuniary advantage annexed to tyrannical extortion, any one may understand how great the publican's temptation was.

There was another aggravation of his position. He was persuaded to live satisfied with a low standard of morality. The principle of right and wrong is eternally fixed in the heavens. It is unchangeably one and the same. But the application of principle is perpetually variable. It is one in one age or nation and another in another age or nation. Every profession has its conventional morality, current nowhere else. That which is permitted by the peculiar standard of truth acknowledged in diplomatic circles would be falsehood among plain men. Honesty at the bar of commerce would hardly bear that name elsewhere. The purity and tenderness of some fraternities would be rightly named the opposite if it were found in another quarter.

And in all these cases the temptation is to live content with the accepted standard of a man's own profession or

craft. The real difference between the worldly man and the religious man is that the worldling lives below the demands of his age and the servant of God maintains his measure of responsibility above them. Amongst publicans a very little would count a great deal. That which would be laxity to a Jew and shame to a Pharisee might be reckoned very strict morality for a publican. Zaccheus was driven towards hardness in evil from having no character to support. The extent to which sin hardens depends partly on the estimate taken of it by society. The falsehood of Abraham, the guilt and violence of David, were very different in their effect on character in an age when truth, and purity, and gentleness were scarcely recognized by the outside world. Then these men had not so sinned against their consciences as men would sin now in doing the same acts, because the moral sense was less enlightened, and society not so well educated in discrimination. But when the voice of public opinion pronounces either an office or a man scandalous, it either finds or makes them what it has pronounced them.

More vile and more degraded than any position that we know of was the position of publican among the Jews. And a fine social scorn was in some sense responsible for the estimation in which it was held and for the effect upon the man himself. A penitent publican could not go to the house of God without the risk of having muttered near him the sanctimonious thanksgiving of a Pharisee, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as this man." A Roman tax-gatherer, even though high in office and rich besides, could not receive a prophet into his house without being saluted by the murmurs of the crowd, as in this instance: "He has gone to eat bread with a man that is a sinner." The proof of his being a sinner? The only proof was that he was a publican. The reputation of his office was evidence enough to make him a pariah — a social outcast.

There are men and women in every community who have committed sins that have never been published to the world, and therefore, though they be still untouched by the love of God in His forbearance toward them, they have never sunk to degradation. Whereas the very same sins, brought out into the light of day and branded with public shame, have dragged other people not worse than they down to the lowest infamy. There is no principle in education or in life more sure than this: to stigmatize is to ruin; to take away a character is to take away all. There is no power committed to corporate man more certain and more awful, more capable of use and abuse, than this: "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain," etc. Society has it in her power by harsh judgment and cruel ostracism to bind the real or reputed transgressions of men upon them and hound them to destruction. She has it equally in her power by kindliness and sympathy to loose them, to restore to the transgressor his fast waning self-respect and to save him.

Zaccheus, then, had become hardened, because he had no character to support. He had done wrong, and where remorse exists without penitence even a four-fold restitution will hardly remove the recollection and the benumbing influence of past guilt.

For there is a difference between remorse and penitence. Remorse is the consciousness of wrongdoing with no sense of love. It involves a loss of self-respect. The remorseful man cannot forgive himself. Penitence is the same consciousness of wrong done, with the added feeling of tenderness and gratitude. The man forgives himself because God has forgiven him. Pernicious as have been the consequences of self-righteousness, more destructive still have been the consequences of remorse. If self-righteousness has slain its thousands, remorse has slain its tens of thousands; for indisputably, self-righteousness, whatever

else it fails to do, secures a man from degradation. We wonder sometimes at the sure walk of those persons who, to trust their own estimate of themselves, are always right. They never seem to go wrong seriously. Their children are apparently irreproachable. Their conduct is generally above exception. Pride saves them from a fall. The element of self-respect — healthful always — is their safeguard. When the Pharisee thanked God that he was not an extortioner, nor unjust, nor an adulterer, and that he was regular and unsparing in the performance of his religious duties according to the then accepted measure of such things, he was self-righteous undoubtedly, but his self-righteousness, while it kept him from saintliness, saved him from degradation too. He might be too selfish in his gloating over his good deeds to be a saint, but for the same reason he was too proud to be a sinner. He is upheld by lofty self-admiration. Remorse, on the contrary, crushes a man. He may lose the world's respect in a way and still fall back upon the consciousness of God's smile. But if a man loses his own respect he sinks down, and down, and deeper yet, until he can recover himself only by feeling that God has loved him sublimely, only by daring at last to reverence that for which God has given His Son to die. Remorse is like the clog of an insoluble debt. The debtor is proverbially extravagant. One more expense does not matter when the great bankruptcy is near. And so why should the sinner pause when all is hopeless ? What is one transgression added to the already infinite list ? It was easier for Zaccheus to sin as the years went by. The shudder and the horror with which he yielded to the earlier transgressions had all passed away, and now there was neither struggle nor reluctance. He had taken the eager plunge down the precipice on the brink of which he once stood trembling. This publican had lost his self-respect and sin was easy.

Here again was a triumph over difficulties on man's part and on God's part. Man's part in Zaccheus's case was exhibited in the discovery of expedients. The Redeemer came to Jericho and Zaccheus desired to see that blessed countenance, whose very looks, he was told, shed peace upon restless spirits and fevered hearts. But Zaccheus was small of stature, and a crowd surrounded the Christ. Therefore he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree. This was not altogether idle curiosity. This crowd thronging the footsteps of the Christ was not probably of the same material as would have been found in any amphitheatre at Rome or Jerusalem. He was known as a religious teacher, a prophet, and those who took pains to see Him were probably in some sense actuated by religious motives. It was not an easy matter for Zaccheus to see the Christ, but he was shrewd and tactful in the use of means.

We have heard of the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties. The shepherd, with no apparatus besides his thread and beads, has lain on his back on the starry night, mapped the heavens, and unconsciously become a distinguished astronomer. The peasant lad, with no tools but his rude knife, and a visit now and then to the neighboring town, began his scientific education by producing a watch that would mark the time. The blind man, trampling upon impossibilities, has explored the economy of the beehive and, more wondrous still, has lectured on the laws of light. The timid stammerer, with pebbles in his mouth and the roar of the sea-surge in his ear, has attained correctest elocution, and has swayed as one man the changeful tides of Athenian democracy. Helen Keller, blind and deaf, studies so effectively that she passes university examinations, and places herself in the front among students and scholars.

All these citations show the use of expedients, the mastery of untoward circumstance, the policy of the man

or woman who makes or dominates his or her environment. It is exactly so in the religious life as well. No man ever trod exactly the path that others trod before him. There is no exact chart laid down for the voyage. The rocks and quicksands of our course are shifting. He who enters upon the ocean of existence arches his sails to an untried breeze. He is the first that ever burst into that lonely sea. Every life is a new life. Every day is a new day in a sense, like nothing that went before or can follow after. No books, no systems, no forecast, no set of rules, can provide for all the cases of your career and mine. Every real exigency has no exact precedent. In the conduct of a campaign or the building of a bridge unforeseen difficulties and unexpected disasters must be met by that inexhaustible fertility of invention which men call talent or genius, and so the obstacles and the hindrances of the Christian life must be met by living to God first-hand. If we are in earnest, as was Zaccheus, we will avail ourselves of peculiar methods of getting over peculiar emergencies. There are times when, not being on a level with other men in qualifications of temper, mind and character, we must compensate by ingenuity. We must climb over the crowd of hindrances which stand between the soul and the Christ. We must run before, like the publican there in Jerusalem, and get into the sycamore solitude that we may see Him. Without a habit of aptitude like this you will never behold the King in His beauty; you will never have a glimpse of His face or hear clearly His voice.

God's part in this triumph over difficulties is exhibited in the address of the Christ — "Zaccheus, make haste and come down," etc. There was an invitation here. We read on the face of the narrative that the publican was seeking our Lord. We read beneath the surface of the story that our Lord was seeking the publican. For what other reason in connection with the will of His Father had

the Master come to Jericho but to seek Zaccheus and such as he? Long years he had been living in the solitude of selfishness, in that demoralizing isolation to which society had consigned him in virtue of his office. At last the Saviour was born into the world, appears in Judea, comes to Jericho — Zaccheus's town — passes down the street where he was, by the sycamore tree in which he was hiding, looks up, sees him, accosts him, invites him. Theological systems apart, is not this what the Bible calls election? We do not find God. God finds us. God's spirit, pervading all time and all space, goes after the souls of men and presently the seeking becomes reciprocal. The divine presence is felt afar off, and the man begins to turn towards it. Then when we begin to seek God we become conscious that God is seeking us with the voice of personal invitation. It is then that the Christ makes His abode with us, and the hour of unutterable joy begins when the banquet of divine love is spread within the soul and the Son of God abides there as at a feast. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice I will come in and sup with him and he with me."

We are saved by divine grace. In the matter of man's salvation God is first. He comes to us self-invited. He speaks to us one by one. He isolates us from the crowd, and sheds upon us the sense of personal recognition. A mysterious blessing is on our homes, and at our tables, and in our hearts. "This day has salvation come to this house, for so much as he also is a son of Abraham."

The divine part here was done in sympathy. By sympathy we commonly mean little more than condolence. If the tear start readily at the voice of grief, and the purse-strings open at the accents of distress, we talk of man's great sympathy. To weep with those that weep — that is all we generally mean by the word sympathy. The fellow-feeling of Christ was something different from this. Ordi-

nary human affinities doubtless Zaccheus could already command. If he were sick, a Pharisee would give him medicine. If he had been in need, a Jew would not have scrupled to bestow an alms. If the publican had been bereaved, many even of that crowd who murmured when they saw him treated by the Christ like a son of Abraham, would have given to his sorrow the tribute of a sigh.

But the Saviour was brotherly to all that is human. He looked after the man or the woman element in everybody. He did not condole with Zaccheus upon his trials in the community. He did not ask him about his soul. He did not preach to him anent his sins. He did not force His way into the house and lecture him for being a publican. Nay — "I will abide at thy house." He identified Himself with a publican. He acknowledged a publican as a brother. He sat at table with a reputed sinner, for beneath all the incidentals of his office, the evil features of his past life, and the moral indifference into which the contempt of society had driven him, Zaccheus was a man — a man with a conscience, a heart, a will, an ethical nature. His pulses throb at the cutting words of the multitude. A sense of human honor makes him shrink into himself at the supercilious words of the Pharisee. He feels the burning shame of the world's disgrace. He was lost so far as the opinion of the community went. He was lost, because no hand was outstretched in Jericho to drag him out of his slough of avarice. He was lost, because everybody kicked him and thrust him down.

It was just such as he that the Son of Man, with the blood of the human race in His veins, came to save. He is brother not only to the saved but to the fallen. He is physician, not to the whole, but to the sick. He is Redeemer not only to those whom God already owns, or who already own God, but to those whom satan has bound.

It is in this brotherliness that the heart of the Christ

differs from every other heart that is found among the sons of men. This is the chief blessedness of the Master. If you are poor you may get some food or clothing from the rich, but you will get precious little genuine sympathy. If you are in pain you get a sort of kindliness from those in health, but, tendered sincerely, it is rather forced and imperfect. If you are miserable and tell out your grief, you have the shame of knowing that you are not understood, and that you have exposed your inner self to a rude, unfeeling gaze. If you are in doubt and speak of your perplexities to religious people they ask, "What right have you to be uncertain about what we teach you?" They suspect your character. They shake their heads and whisper it about gravely that you have been reading strange books, that you are verging on infidelity. If you are depressed with guilt, to whom shall you tell out your story of shame? You cannot speak to your brother man, you say, for by so doing you only injure him, or else weaken yourself — a false argument, but you use it. You cannot disclose it to society, for society judges in the gross, by general rules, and cannot take into account the delicate differences of transgression. It is too prone to banish the frail penitent, and to do homage to the sinner entrenched behind his wealth or position.

Then it is that, repulsed on all sides and lonely, we turn to Him whose mighty heart understands and feels all. "Lord, to whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life?" Then it is that, like Zaccheus, misinterpreted, suspected by the world, condemned by our own hearts, deserted and apart, we speak to Him out of the solitude of the sycamore tree, face to face and pulse to pulse: "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Mark the power of Christ's sympathy on Zaccheus's character. Salvation came that day to his house. Who

brought it, and what? The Christ and His Gospel. But what gospel? Not the gospel of speculations, or schemes, or policies, or schools of thought, or rival partisans. Nay, the gospel of loving-kindness, of brotherly feeling, of humanity. It required a masterful glad-tidings to make a man like that lay bare his wealth, ill-gotten or not, and divide it with God and his fellow beings who should need or from whom he had extorted. Learn this: When you and I live the Gospel so, and teach the Gospel so, sinners will believe it, accept it, be saved by it. When we trust the power of God's Gospel of love as did the Master, we shall reclaim the irreclaimable. Eloquence, doctrine, historic order, apostolic truth, are all good; but more than by all else will the sinful, the fallen, the outcast, be won to the Christ if we can show them that we love Him and live unto Him.

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